

25th ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEW X-MEN



#1 of 5

CLAREMONT
DERENICK
PARSONS



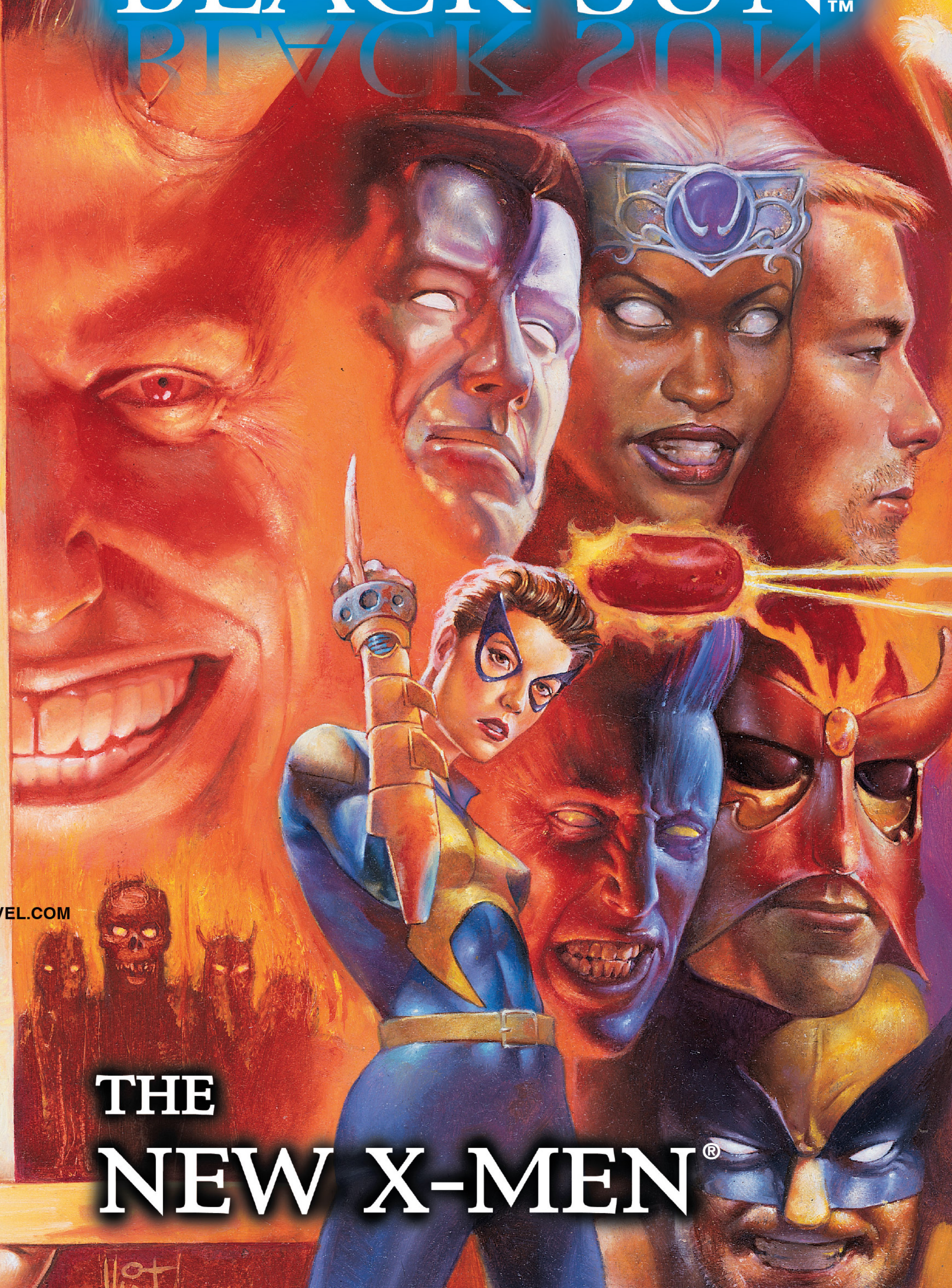
X-MEN[®]

BLACK SUN[™]

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THE
NEW X-MEN[®]



X-MEN BLACK SUN



SHE CHOSE GRANT PARK BECAUSE THE LAKEFRONT IN MIDWINTER -- WITH A VICIOUS WIND BLOWING OFF THE WATER STRAIGHT FROM THE NORTH POLE -- GAVE NO QUARTER.

SHE WAS SPOILING FOR A FIGHT AND DIDN'T MIND STARTING WITH THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES.

FIRST SPELL:

SKIN the CAT!

BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & THOMAS DERENICK

SHE CHOSE CHRISTMAS BECAUSE THAT WAS WHEN SHE FIRST FOUGHT THE DEMON.

THIS ONE MADE ITS MOVE AT BUCKINGHAM FOUNTAIN, WHERE SHE AND HER DAD USED TO SHARE SUMMER HOTDOGS BACK WHEN THEY WERE A FAMILY.

BACK BEFORE KITTY PRYDE JOINED THE X-MEN AND BECAME

SHADOWCAT!

SEAN
PARSONS
Inker

POP
VISUALS
Lettering

TOM
SMITH
Colorist

MIKE
MARTS
Editor

BOB
HARRAS
E-I-C



IT'S CALLED THE
N'GARAI.

IT'S FASTER
THAN SHE
REMEMBERED.

BUT THEN,
SO IS SHE.

AND FAR
DEADLIER.

SHE PHASES AS SHE KICKS
HERSELF UP AND AWAY, SLIDING
THE MOLECULES OF HER OWN
BODY THROUGH THOSE OF HER
FOE'S, BECOMING AS HARD
TO HOLD AS THE AIR ITSELF.

TO KITTY, EVERY DAY HAS
BEEN DANGEROUS OF LATE.

EVERY BATTLE, A MATTER
OF LIFE AND DEATH.

WHICH MAKES
THAT LIFE ALL THE
MORE PRECIOUS.

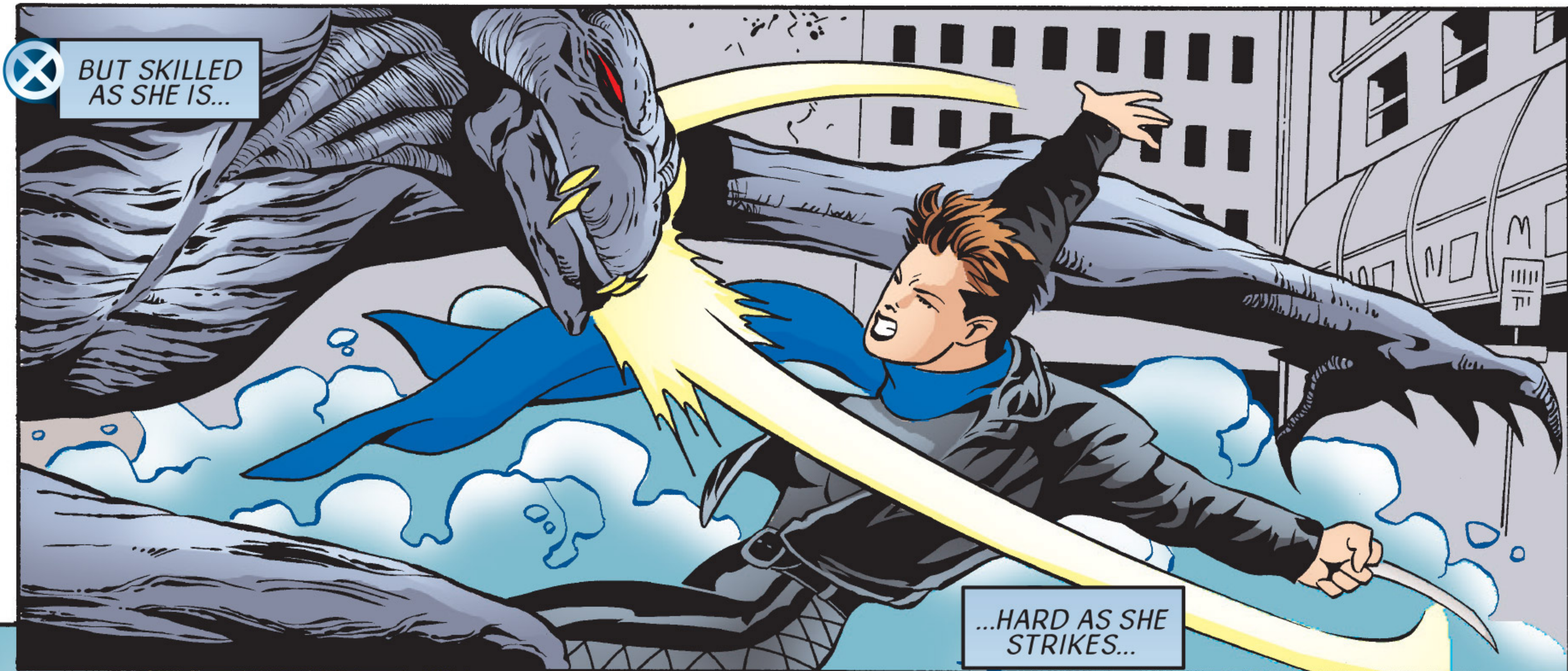
SHE'S GOTTEN
VERY GOOD AT
DEFENDING IT.

FROM HER BOOT
COMES A BLADE OF
POLISHED BONE, IN
THE SHAPE OF A CLAW.

IT USED TO BELONG
TO HER TEAMMATE,
WOLVERINE.

WHEN THEY WERE
BROKEN OFF
DURING A BATTLE,
SHE COLLECTED
THEM --

-- PARTLY AS
KEEPSAKES,
PARTLY AS
TALISMANS --
AND MADE
THEM HER OWN.



BUT SKILLED
AS SHE IS...

...HARD AS SHE
STRIKES...



...THE DEMON QUICKLY
PROVES AN ADVERSARY
WORTHY OF HER.

WHAK

OW!



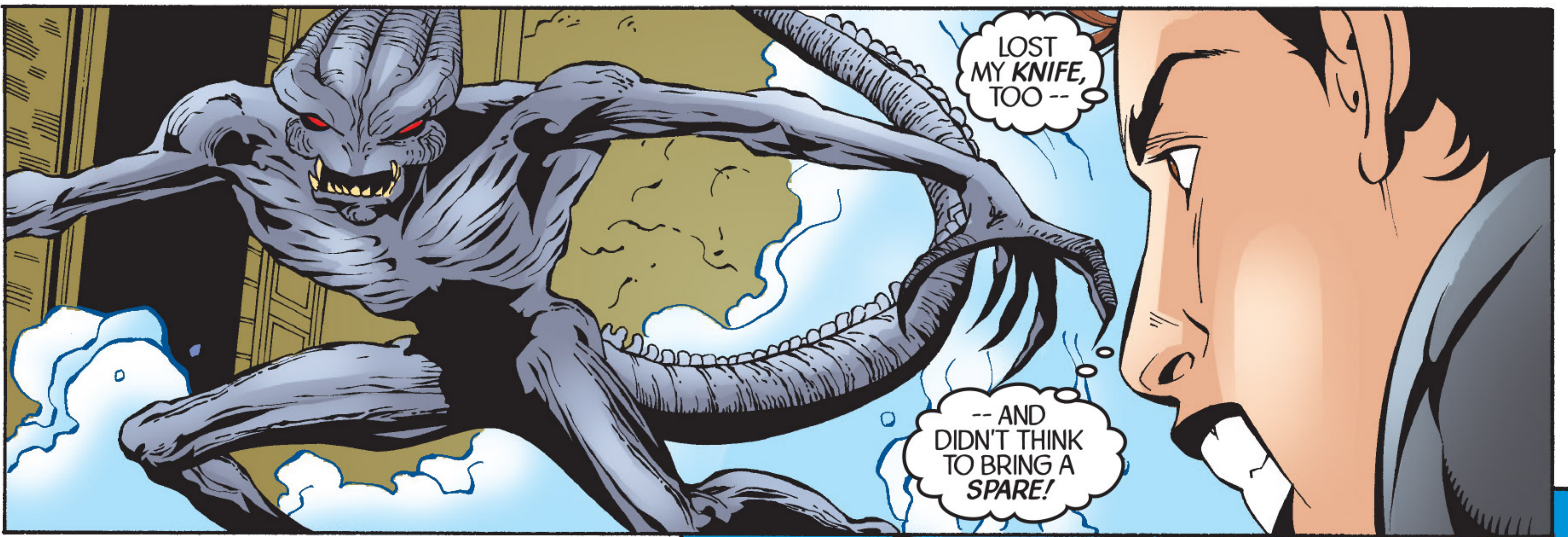
STUPID! STUPID!
STUPID!
I KNOW
WHAT I'M UP
AGAINST!



HOW
COULD I FORGET
THAT THE DEMON
CAN COME AT ME FIVE
DIFFERENT WAYS
AT ONCE?

CAUGHT ME
GOOD, TOO. IF MY *BACK*
LOOKS ANYTHING LIKE
WHAT'S LEFT OF MY
JACKET --?!

THOUGHTS,
DON'T GO
THERE!



LOST
MY KNIFE,
TOO --

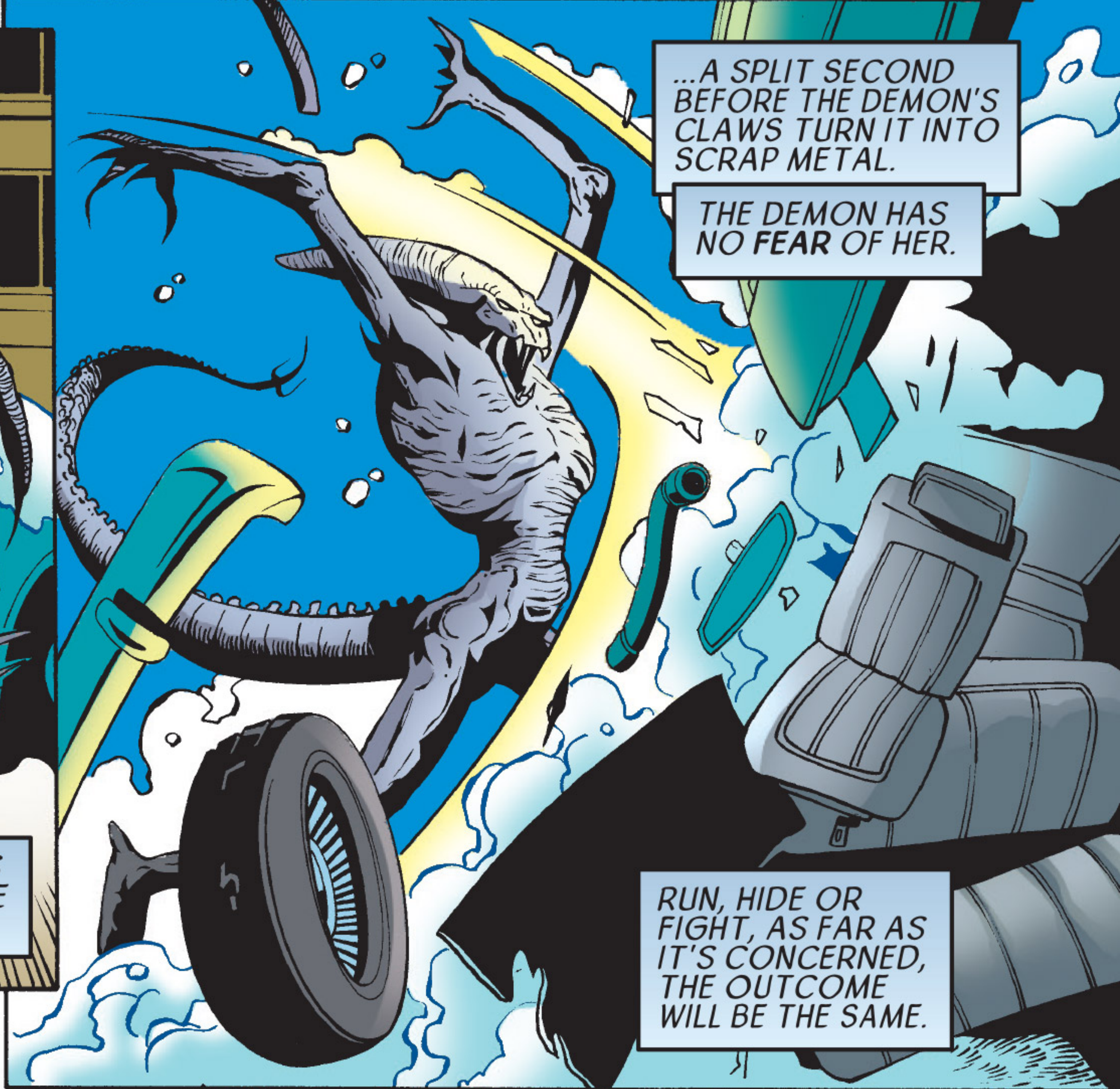
-- AND
DIDN'T THINK
TO BRING A
SPARE!



DEMON
MUST FIGURE
I'M TOAST!



SHE DUCKS
BEHIND THE
CAR...

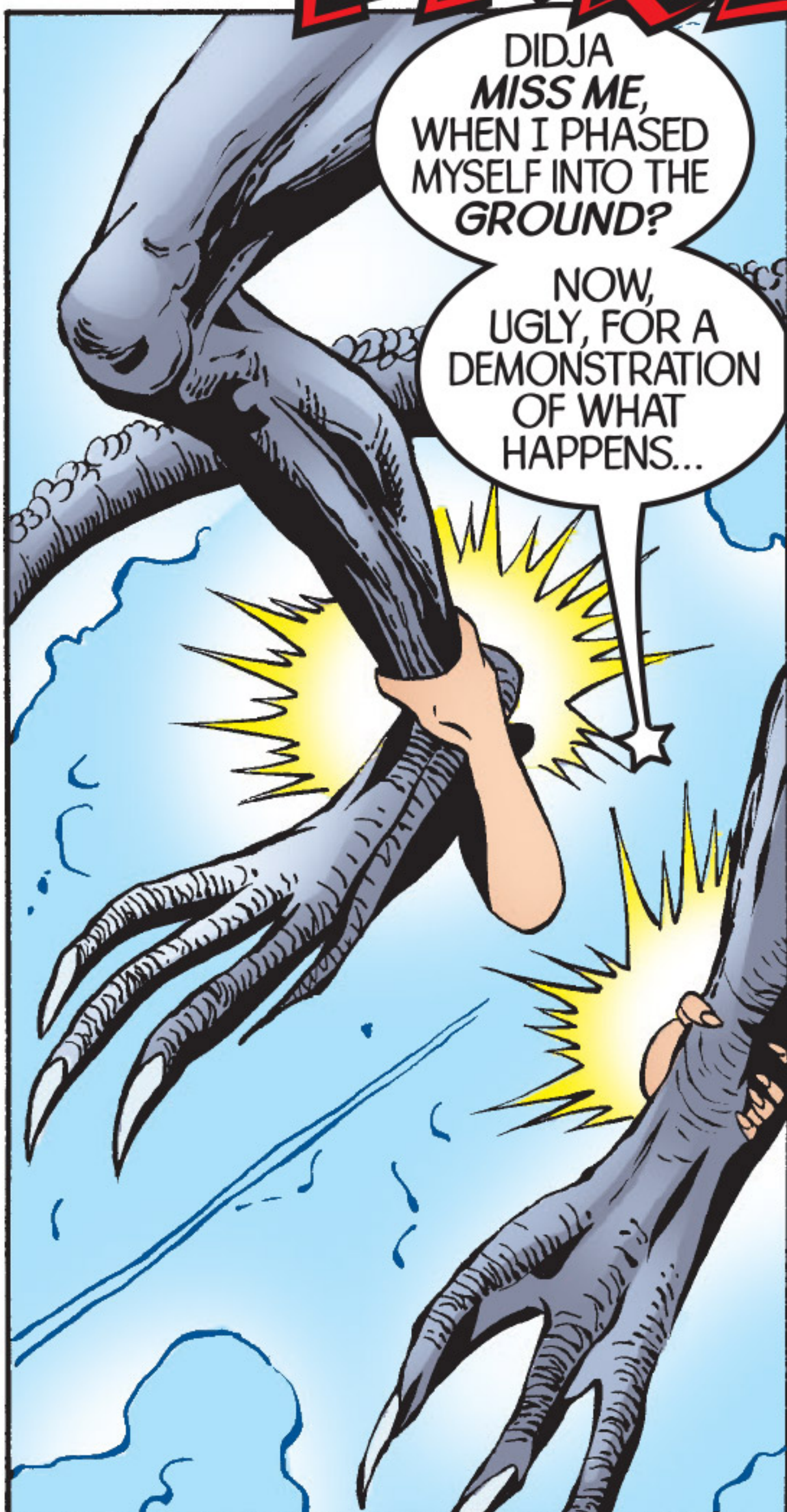


...A SPLIT SECOND
BEFORE THE DEMON'S
CLAWS TURN IT INTO
SCRAP METAL.

THE DEMON HAS
NO FEAR OF HER.

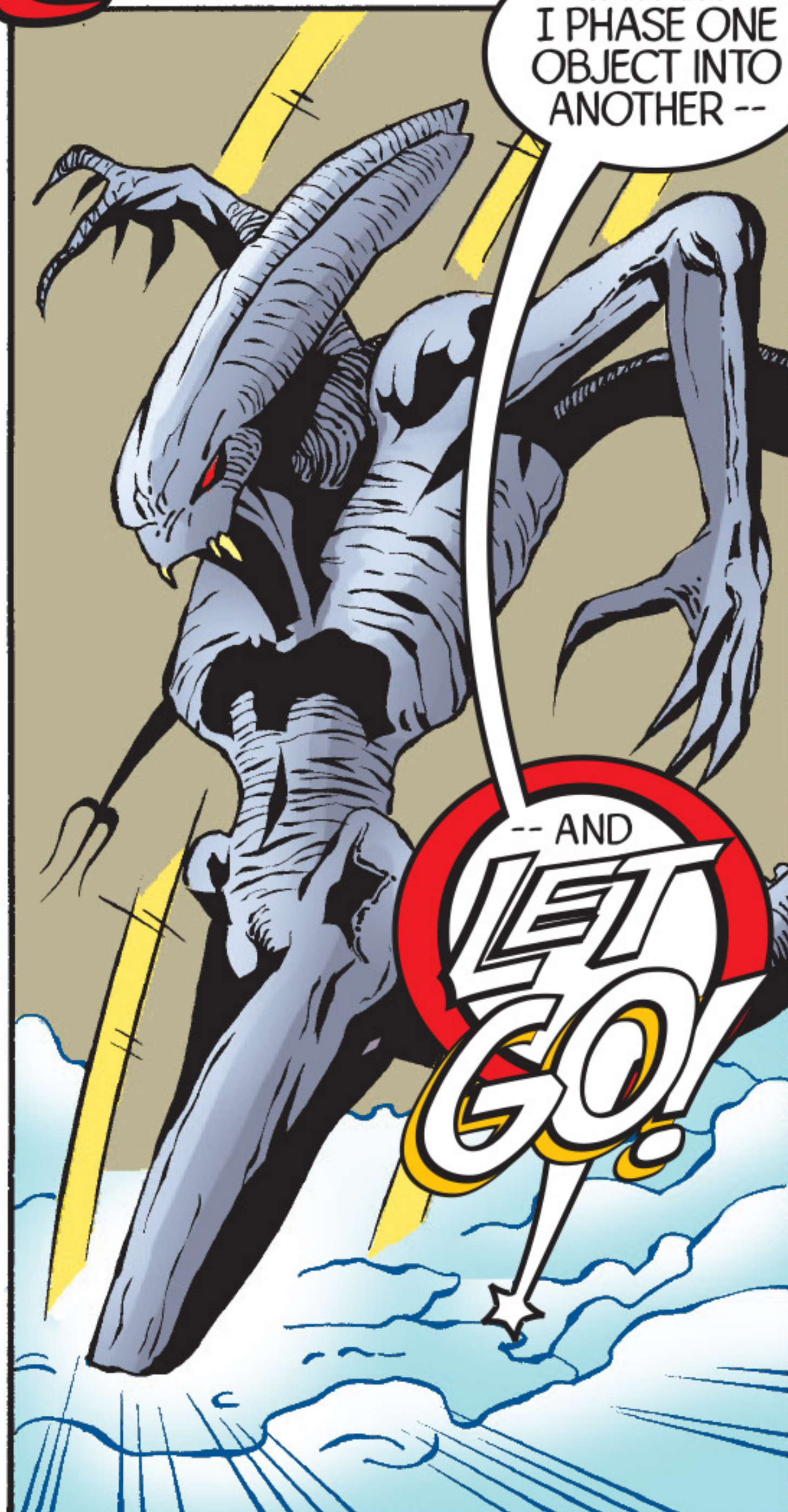
RUN, HIDE OR
FIGHT, AS FAR AS
IT'S CONCERNED,
THE OUTCOME
WILL BE THE SAME.

SURPRISE!



DIDJA
MISS ME,
WHEN I PHASED
MYSELF INTO THE
GROUND?

NOW,
UGLY, FOR A
DEMONSTRATION
OF WHAT
HAPPENS...



...WHEN
I PHASE ONE
OBJECT INTO
ANOTHER --

-- AND
**LET
GO!**



YAGH!



STICK AROUND --
NOT THAT YOU
HAVE MUCH
CHOICE --

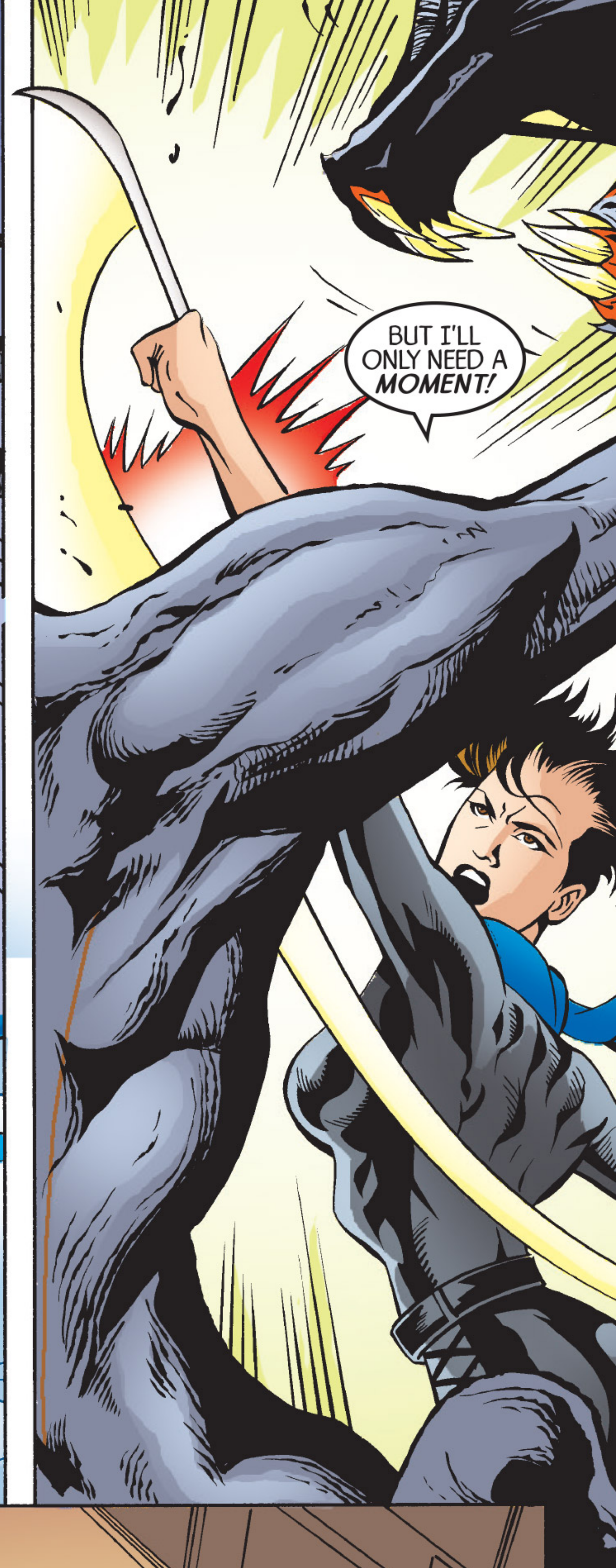
-- BECAUSE IT GETS
BETTER!

MY
PHASING POWER
DISRUPTS ELECTRICAL
CIRCUITRY.

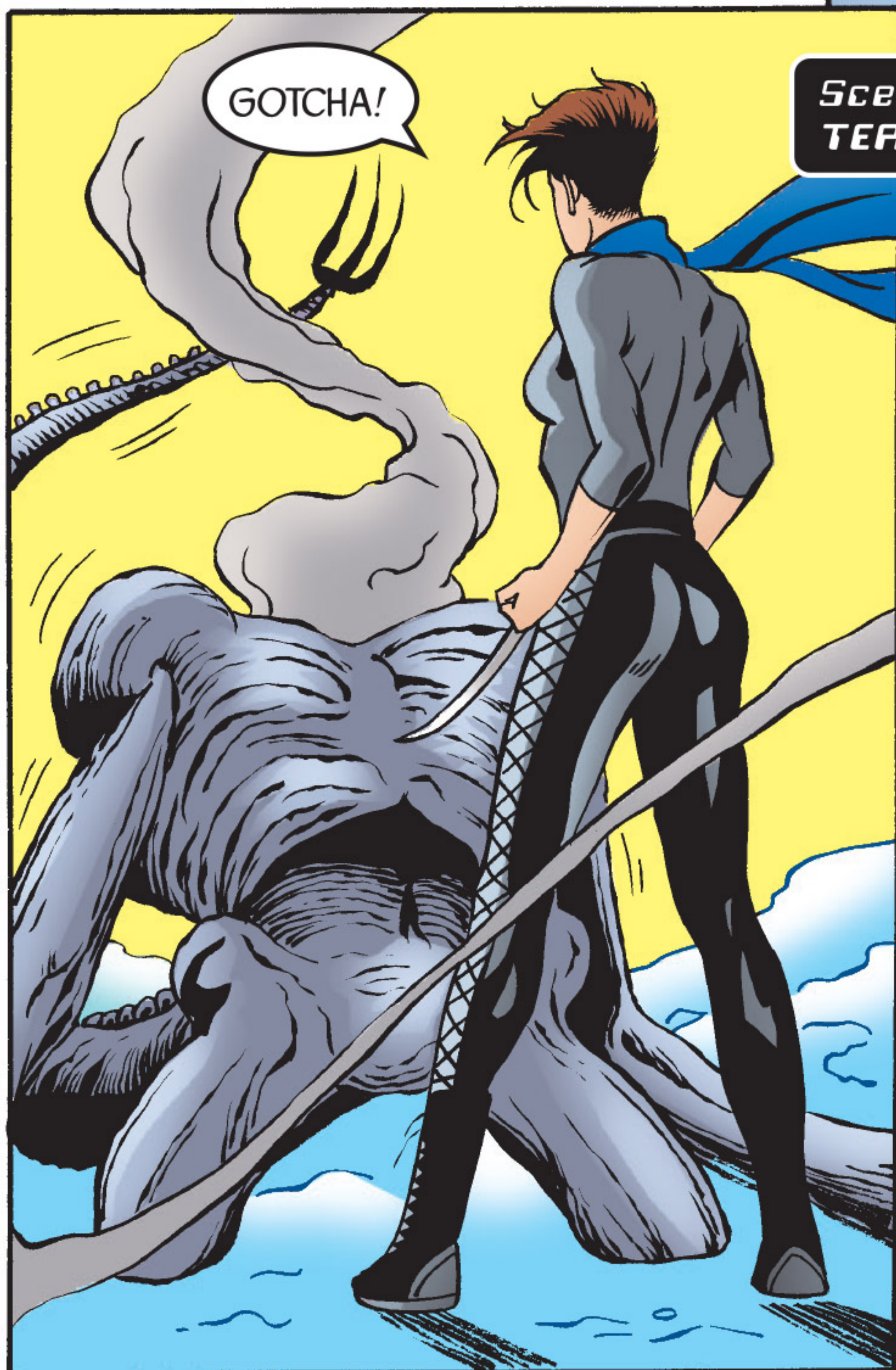
IF I
CONCENTRATE
RIGHT, THAT INCLUDES
THE **NEURAL**-ELECTRIC
NET OF A BODY'S
NERVOUS
SYSTEM.

INSTANT
SPAZZ.

THE EFFECT IS
TRANSITORY.



BUT I'LL
ONLY NEED A
MOMENT!



GOTCHA!

**Scenario
TERMINATED.**

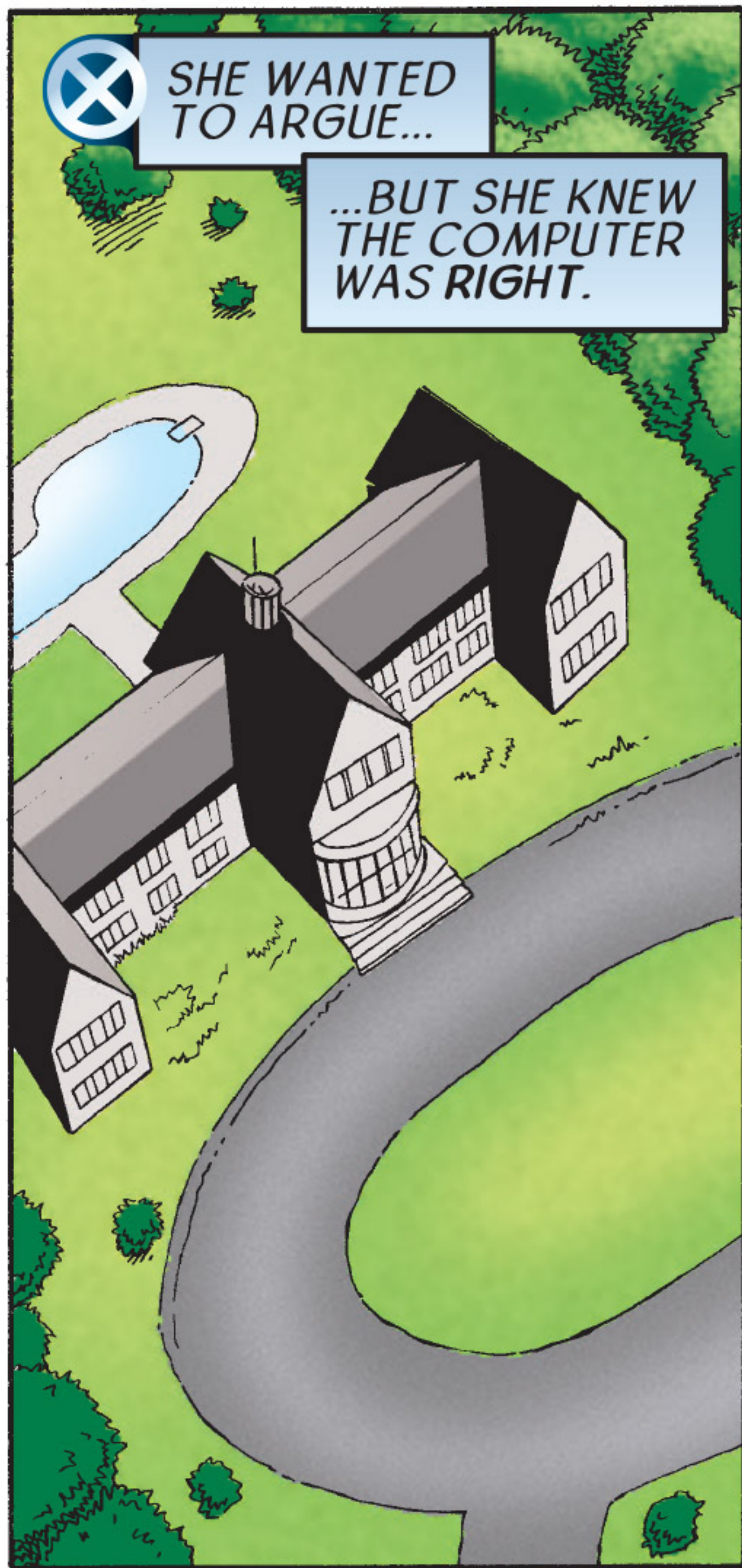
**Program
Complete.**

EVALUATION,
COMPUTER?

You were
evenly matched,
Shadowcat.

Yet in the course of
the engagement you
suffered potentially
CRITICAL injuries.
Reminder. N'Garai
claws have been known
to be **POISONED.**

Incorporating all parameters of
the scenario and comparing it with
past performance, your execution
merits a rating of 7.83. For an
X-Man of your capabilities and
experience, that is **SUB-PAR.**



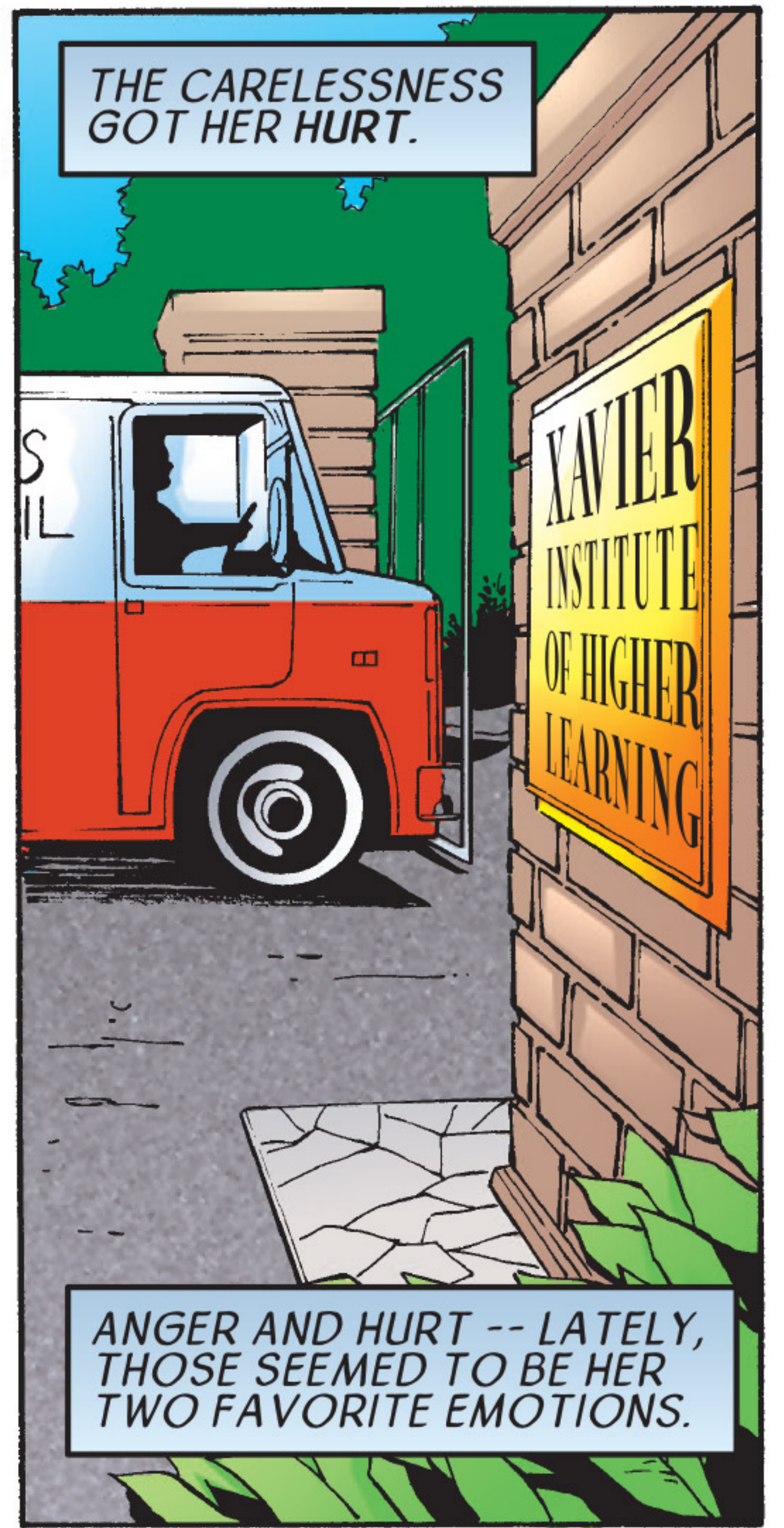
X SHE WANTED TO ARGUE...

...BUT SHE KNEW THE COMPUTER WAS RIGHT.



SHE WAS ANGRY. SHE WANTED TO HIT SOMETHING.

SHE GOT WHAT SHE WANTED, BUT THE ANGER MADE HER CARELESS.



THE CARELESSNESS GOT HER HURT.

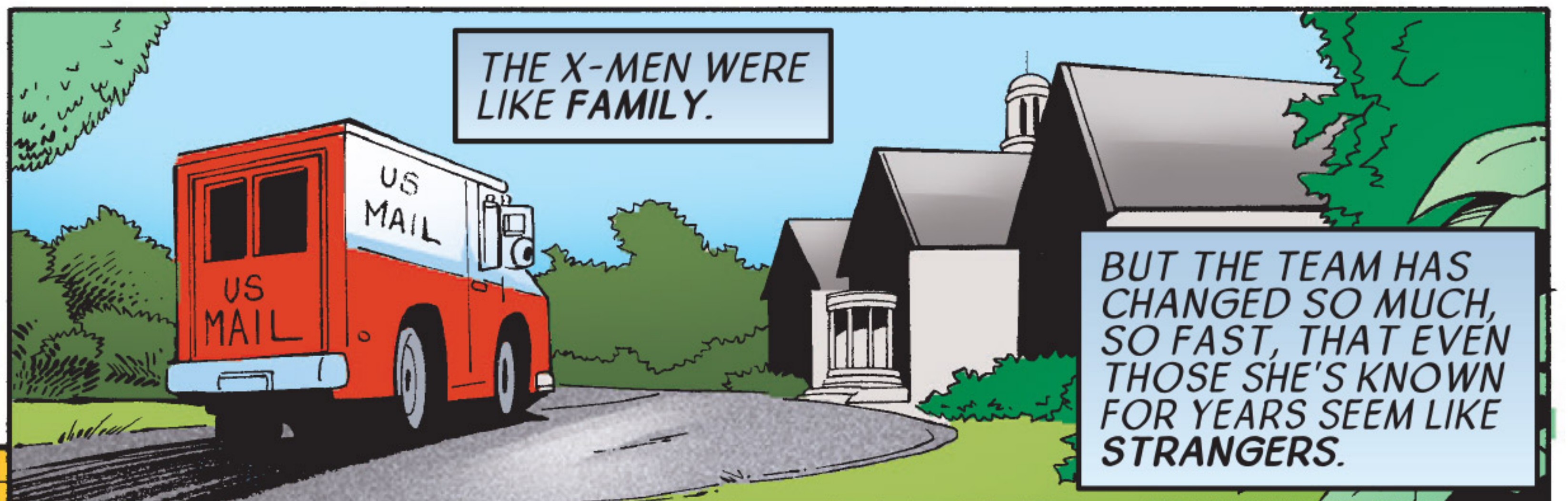
ANGER AND HURT -- LATELY, THOSE SEEMED TO BE HER TWO FAVORITE EMOTIONS.



THIS MANSION, THE XAVIER INSTITUTE, USED TO BE HOME.

NOW IT'S JUST THE PLACE SHE LIVES --

-- BASICALLY BECAUSE SHE FEELS LIKE SHE HAS NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.



THE X-MEN WERE LIKE FAMILY.

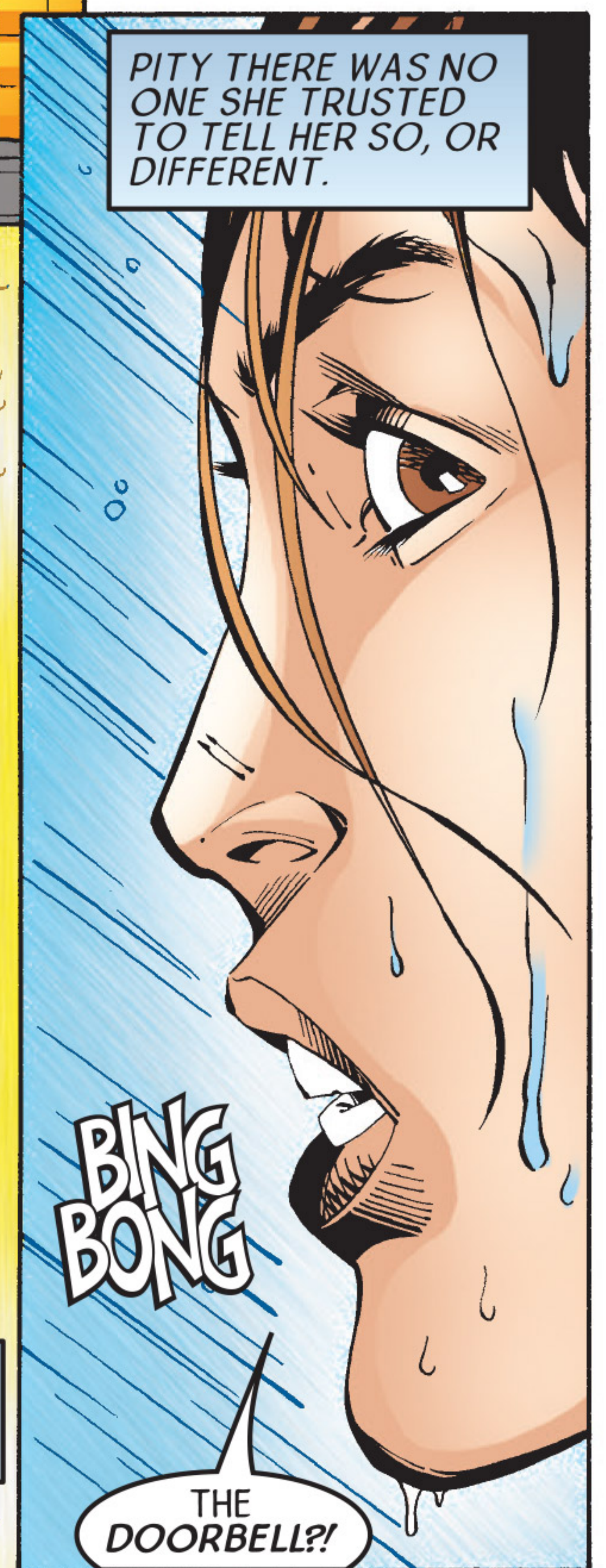
BUT THE TEAM HAS CHANGED SO MUCH, SO FAST, THAT EVEN THOSE SHE'S KNOWN FOR YEARS SEEM LIKE STRANGERS.



NO LESS SO, SHE ACKNOWLEDGES WITH A WRY GRIN, THAN THE FACE THAT LOOKS BACK FROM THE MIRROR.

MAYBE THE NEW HAIRCUT WAS A MISTAKE.

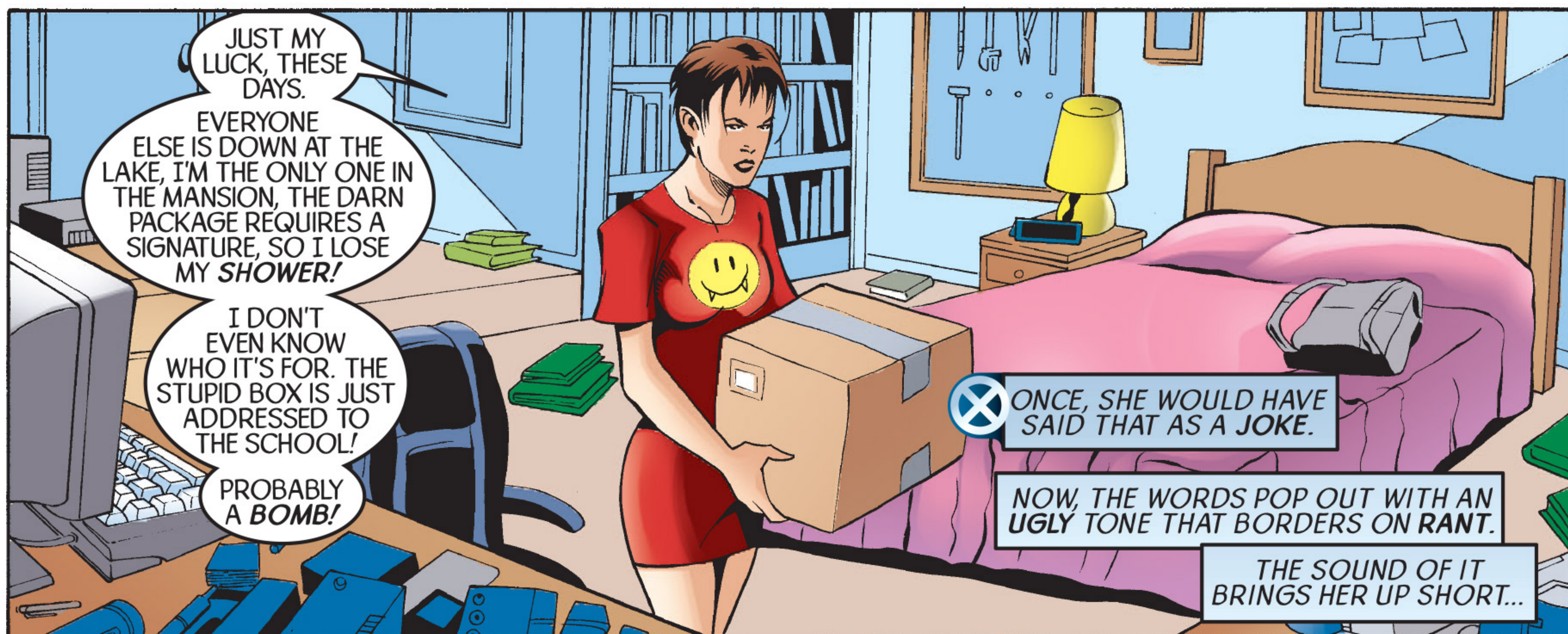
IT SEEMED LIKE A GREAT IDEA AT THE TIME.



PITY THERE WAS NO ONE SHE TRUSTED TO TELL HER SO, OR DIFFERENT.

BING BONG

THE DOORBELL?!



JUST MY LUCK, THESE DAYS.

EVERYONE ELSE IS DOWN AT THE LAKE, I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THE MANSION, THE DARN PACKAGE REQUIRES A SIGNATURE, SO I LOSE MY *SHOWER!*

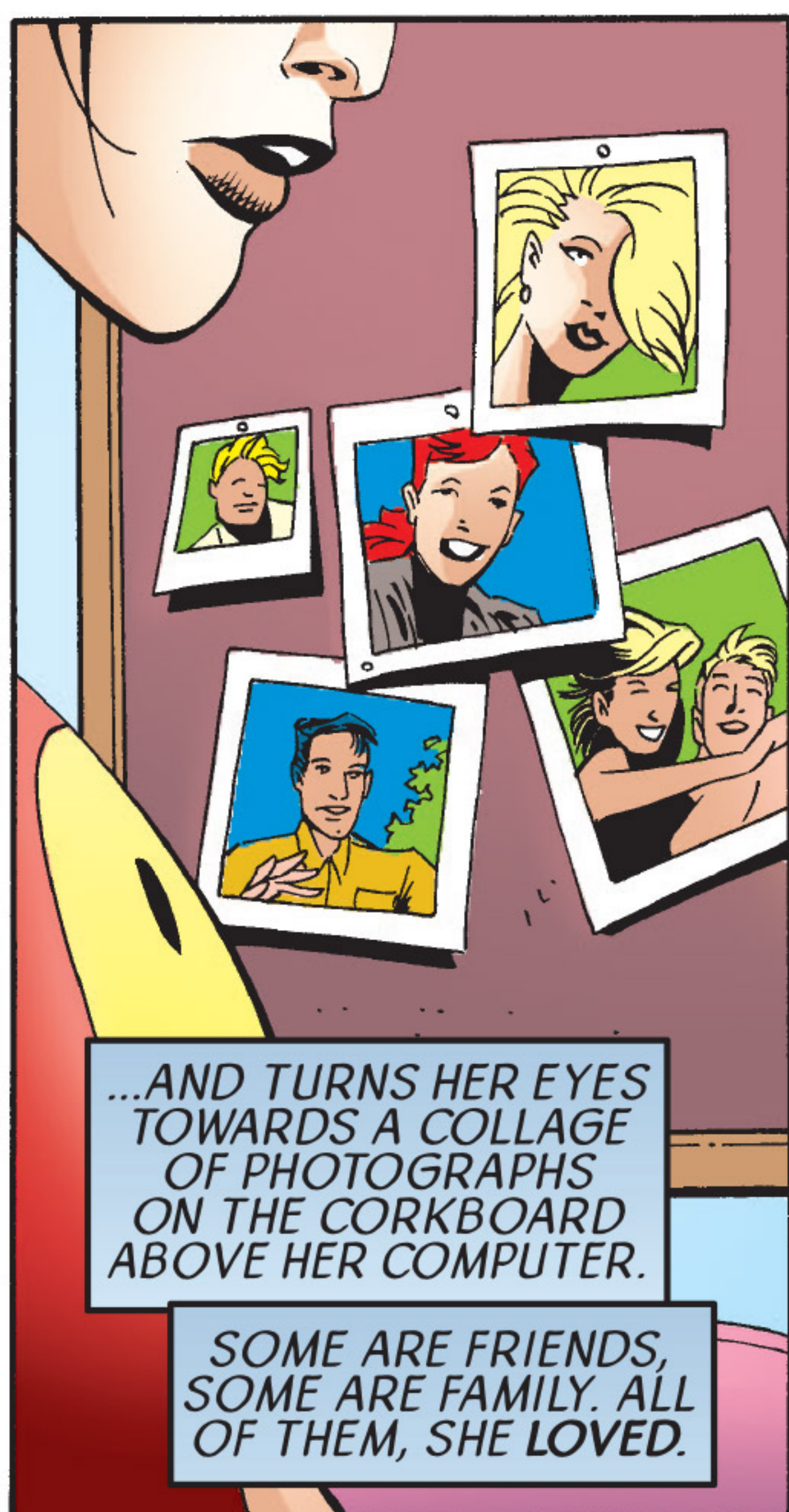
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO IT'S FOR. THE STUPID BOX IS JUST ADDRESSED TO THE SCHOOL!

PROBABLY A *BOMB!*

ONCE, SHE WOULD HAVE SAID THAT AS A JOKE.

NOW, THE WORDS POP OUT WITH AN UGLY TONE THAT BORDERS ON RANT.

THE SOUND OF IT BRINGS HER UP SHORT...



...AND TURNS HER EYES TOWARDS A COLLAGE OF PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE CORKBOARD ABOVE HER COMPUTER.

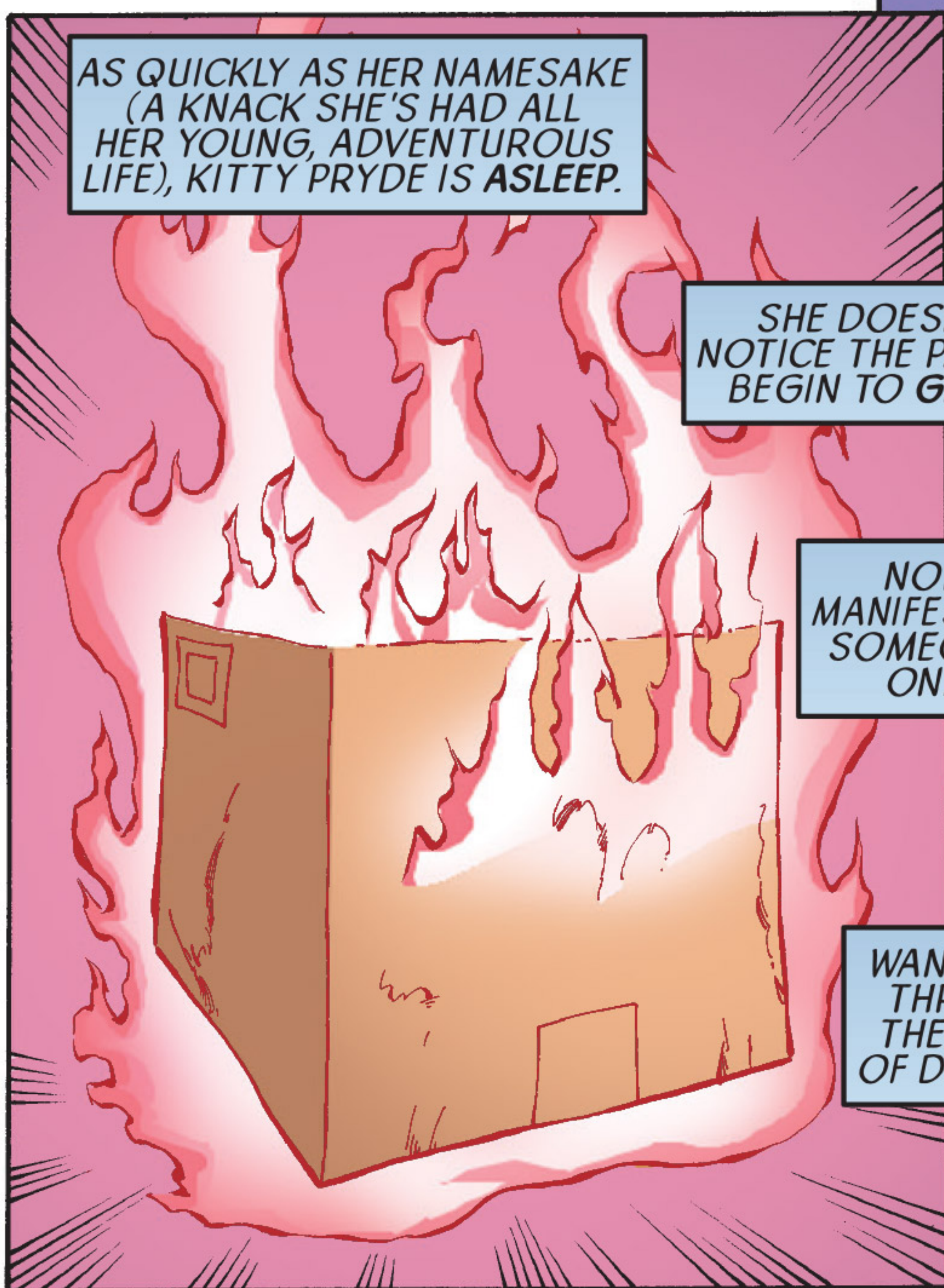
SOME ARE FRIENDS, SOME ARE FAMILY. ALL OF THEM, SHE LOVED.



BUT THEY ALL HAVE ONE MORE THING IN COMMON.



THEY'RE ALL DEAD.



AS QUICKLY AS HER NAMESAKE (A KNACK SHE'S HAD ALL HER YOUNG, ADVENTUROUS LIFE), KITTY PRYDE IS ASLEEP.

SHE DOESN'T NOTICE THE PARCEL BEGIN TO GLOW.

NOR THAT GLOW MANIFEST THE VISAGE OF SOMEONE SHE KNOWS ONLY TOO WELL.

WANDERING THROUGH THE REALM OF DREAMS...



...SHE MISSES THE MOMENT THEY TURN TO DARKEST NIGHTMARES.



ONE OF THE LESSER N'GARAI!

BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER!

RIGHT NOW, THE IMPORTANT THING IS SAVING YOURSELF.



BUT EVEN AS SHE PHASES INTO HER BED...

...THE DEMON REDUCES IT TO KINDLING.



MISSED ME, PAL!



NOW IT'S MY TURN!



NAILED IT WITH ONE SHOT!

WOLVERINE WOULD BE PROUD.

I DID GOOD. I SHOULD BE CHEERING!

BUT ALL I WANT TO DO IS CRY!



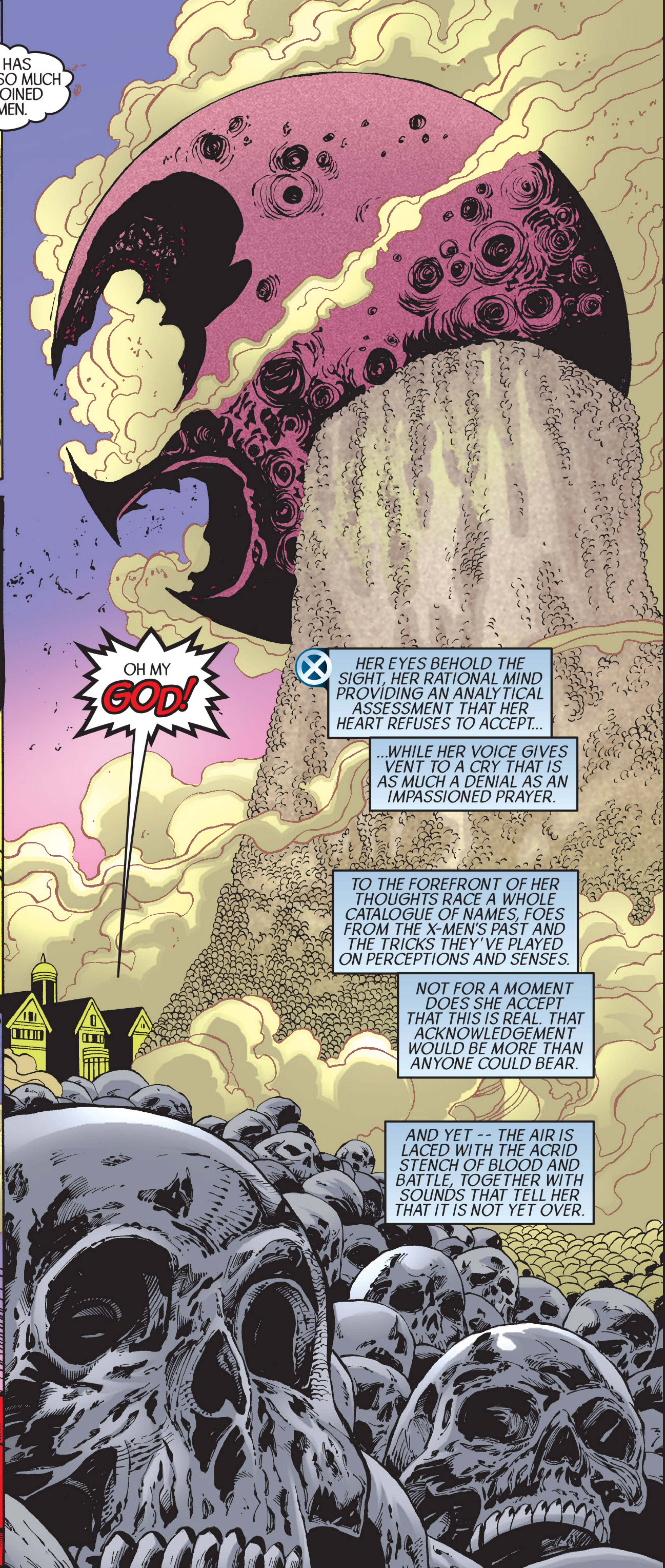
MY LIFE HAS CHANGED SO MUCH SINCE I JOINED THE X-MEN.

MOST GIRLS MY AGE WORRY ABOUT GUYS AND GRADES.

WHAT'S **NATURAL** FOR ME IS THE STUFF OF THEIR WORST NIGHTMARES.



WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE MOON!?!?



OH MY **GOD!**



HER EYES BEHOLD THE SIGHT, HER RATIONAL MIND PROVIDING AN ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT THAT HER HEART REFUSES TO ACCEPT...

...WHILE HER VOICE GIVES VENT TO A CRY THAT IS AS MUCH A DENIAL AS AN IMPASSIONED PRAYER.

TO THE FOREFRONT OF HER THOUGHTS RACE A WHOLE CATALOGUE OF NAMES, FOES FROM THE X-MEN'S PAST AND THE TRICKS THEY'VE PLAYED ON PERCEPTIONS AND SENSES.

NOT FOR A MOMENT DOES SHE ACCEPT THAT THIS IS REAL. THAT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WOULD BE MORE THAN ANYONE COULD BEAR.

AND YET -- THE AIR IS LACED WITH THE ACRID STENCH OF BLOOD AND BATTLE, TOGETHER WITH SOUNDS THAT TELL HER THAT IT IS NOT YET OVER.



THERE'S BEEN A BATTLE HERE... THERE ARE **BODIES** EVERYWHERE!

IS THAT -- **CAPTAIN AMERICA?!?**

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I REFUSE!

SOMEONE LIKE HIM CAN'T BE DEAD!

OH MY GOD!



**NIGHTCRAWLER!
COLOSSUS!**

YOU'RE STILL
ALIVE!

NOT
FOR LONG,
KATZCHEN, IF THESE
WRETCHES HAVE
ANY SAY IN THE
MATTER!

THE
HARDER WE
FIGHT, THE MORE
OF THEM WE
HAVE TO
FACE!



WHAT ABOUT
THE OTHERS?!
WHERE ARE THE
X-MEN?

I FEAR THERE
ARE **NO** OTHERS,
KATYA.

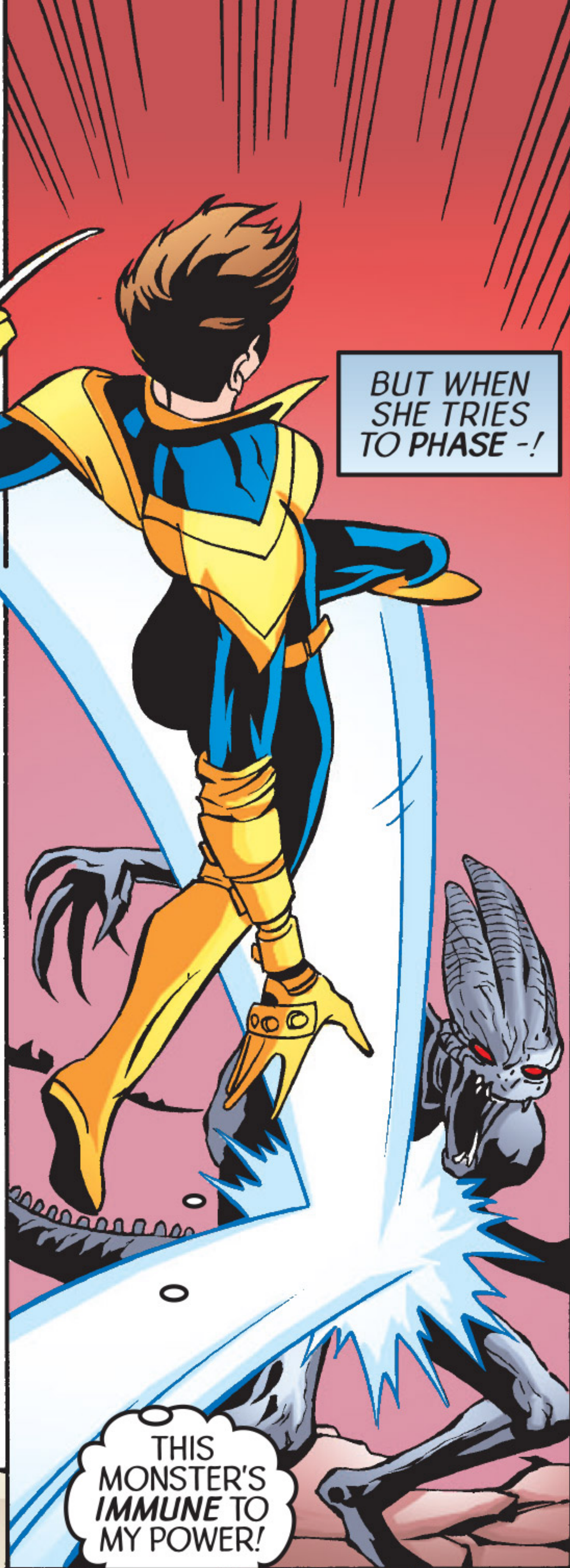
IF YOU
WOULD SEEK
OUR COMRADES,
LOOK ABOUT
YOU.



NO!

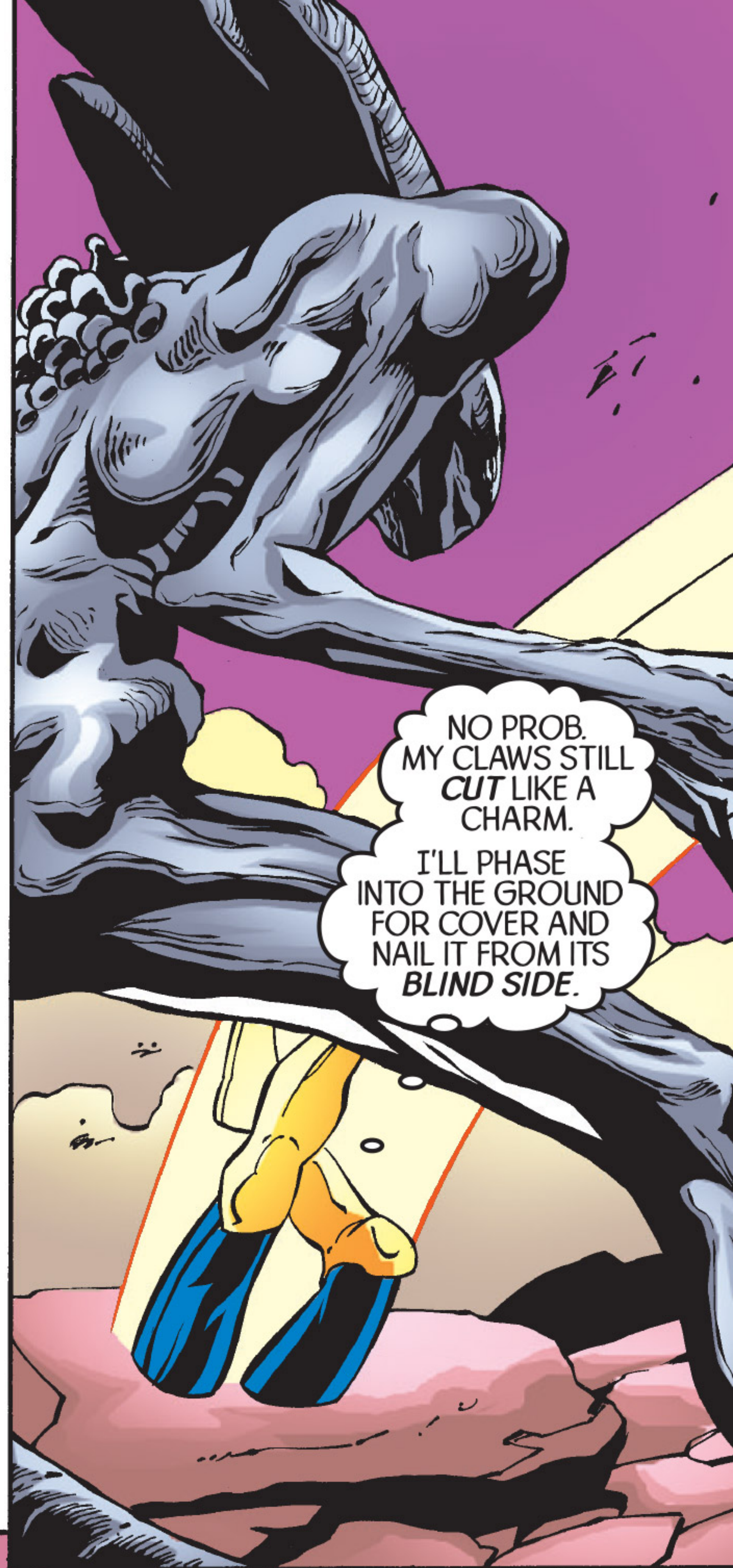


SHE STRIKES LIKE A DEMON
HERSELF, USING HER CLAWS
TO FEARFUL ADVANTAGE.



BUT WHEN
SHE TRIES
TO PHASE -!

THIS
MONSTER'S
IMMUNE TO
MY POWER!



NO PROB.
MY CLAWS STILL
CUT LIKE A
CHARM.
I'LL PHASE
INTO THE GROUND
FOR COVER AND
NAIL IT FROM ITS
BLIND SIDE.



IT
GRABBED
ME!?

NOT
GOOD! SO
TOTALLY NOT
GOOD!

THESE GUYS
NOT ONLY HAVE
THE ABILITY TO
ADAPT TO OUR
POWERS...
...THEY'RE
ALSO ABLE TO
NEUTRALIZE
'EM!



THING IS,
WE DON'T NEED
OUR **POWERS**
TO WIN!

I'M
FLEXIBLE ENOUGH
TO TWIST MY BODY
IN ITS GRASP...

...AND HIT THE
DEMON WITH
MY CLAW!

AND HERE
COME **KURT** AND
PETER TO FINISH
THE JOB!

COLOSSUS,
LOOK OUT!
OUR
BLOWS HAVE NO
EFFECT!

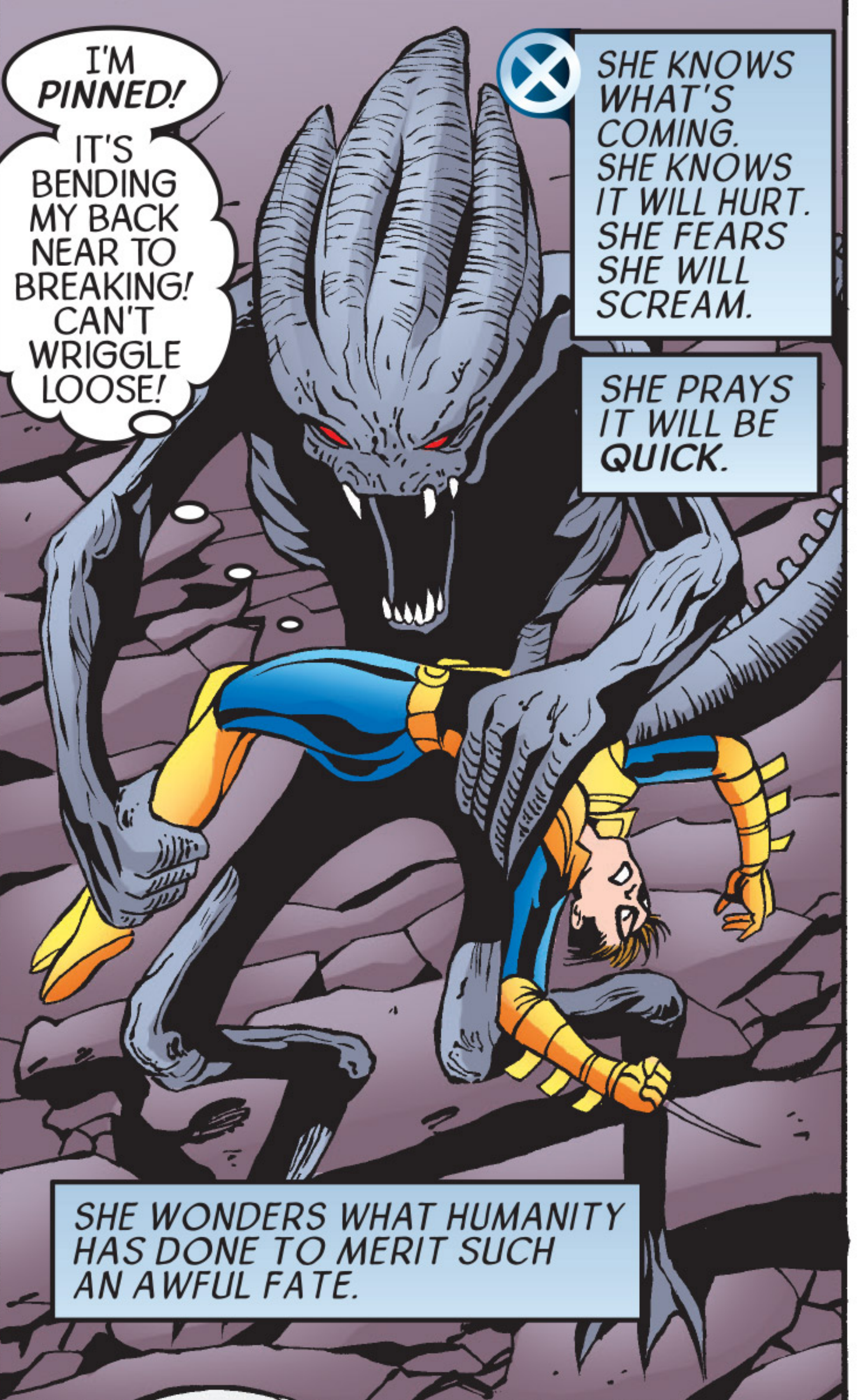


I'M
PINNED!
IT'S
BENDING
MY BACK
NEAR TO
BREAKING!
CAN'T
WRIGGLE
LOOSE!



SHE KNOWS
WHAT'S
COMING.
SHE KNOWS
IT WILL HURT.
SHE FEARS
SHE WILL
SCREAM.

SHE PRAYS
IT WILL BE
QUICK.



SHE WONDER
SHE WONDERS WHAT HUMANITY
HAS DONE TO MERIT SUCH
AN AWFUL FATE.

THEN, MIRACULOUSLY,
SHE THINKS SHE SHOULD
HAVE HAD MORE FAITH.



ENOUGH!

A
LIGHTNING
BOLT --
-- FRIED
THE MONSTER
WITHOUT EVEN
GIVING ME A
STATIC
TICKLE!



WAY
TO GO,
STORM!



YOUR
DAY IS DONE,
DEMON.
I
WILL SEE NO
MORE X-MEN
PERISH!



PROUD WORDS.
BOLD SENTIMENTS.



GIVEN THE LIE THE
MOMENT THEY'RE
UTTERED BY A
SWARM OF LESSER
FLYING DEMONS.

BEFORE THE WIND-RIDER
CAN MUSTER A DEFENSE,
SHE IS OVERWHELMED.



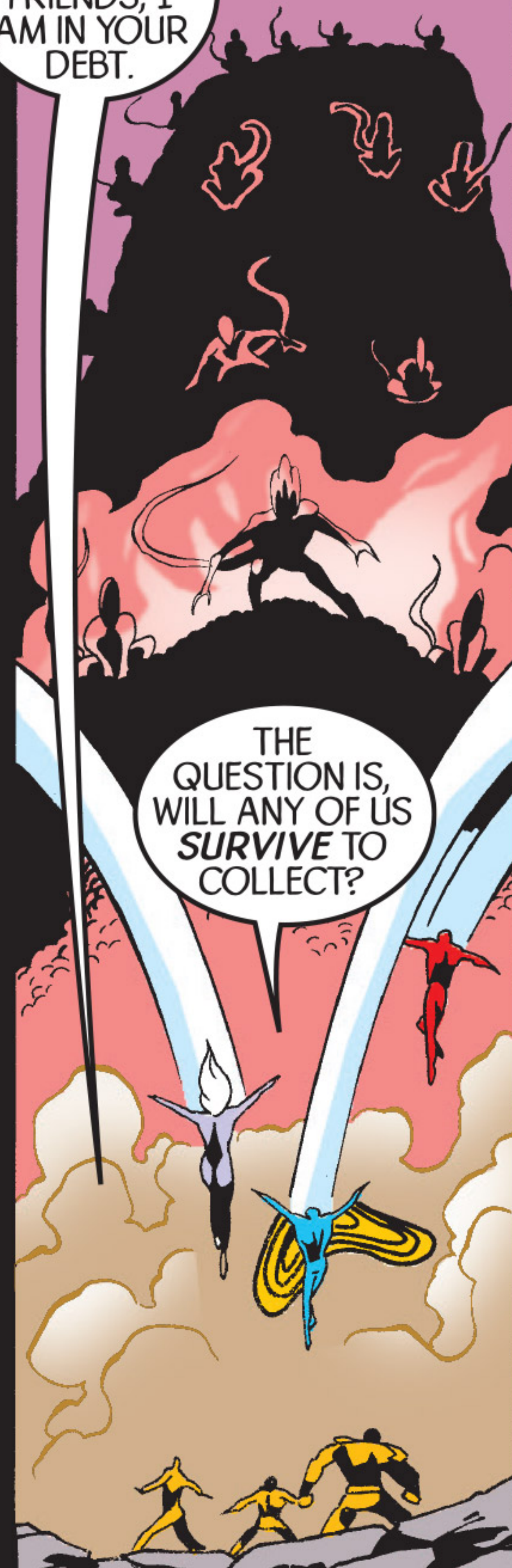
BUT SHE
HAS NOT
COME
ALONE.

I'LL USE MY
ENERGY BOLTS
TO DRIVE BACK
THE HORDE,
BANSHEE!

YOU
EMPLOY YOUR
SONICS TO
CLEAR THE BUGS
OFF STORM'S
BODY!

AYE,
SUNFIRE!

ONCE
MORE, MY
FRIENDS, I
AM IN YOUR
DEBT.



THE
QUESTION IS,
WILL ANY OF US
SURVIVE TO
COLLECT?



THEY'RE SUMMONING
REINFORCEMENTS,
REGROUPING
FOR ANOTHER
ASSAULT.

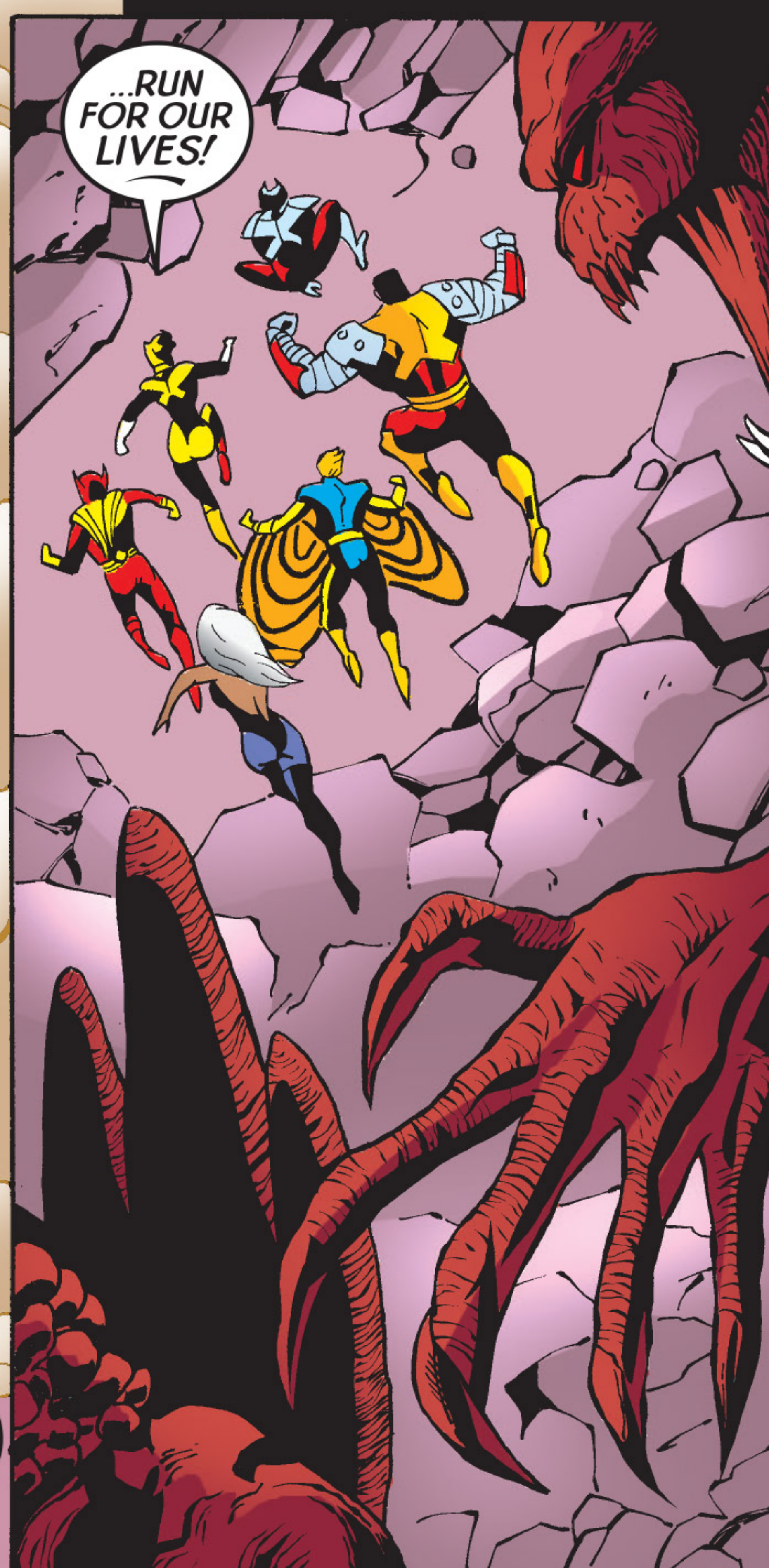
UP TO NOW, I'VE
JUST BEEN HITTING
WHATEVER GOT IN
MY WAY.

I'M
GAME FOR
SUGGESTIONS,
IF ANYONE HAS
A PLAN.

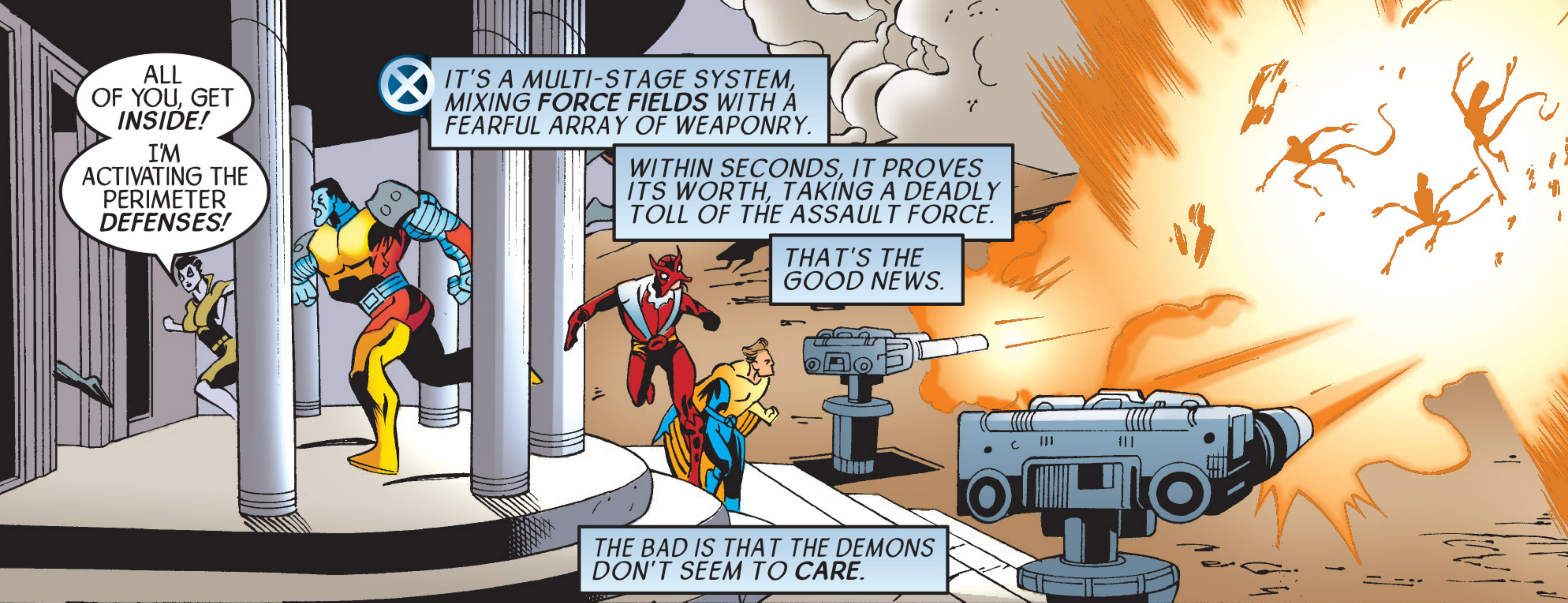
WE CAN'T
STAY IN THE OPEN.
THIS GROUND IS
INDEFENSIBLE.

THE
MANSION LOOKS
PRETTY MUCH
INTACT.

HOWZABOUT
WE CHOOSE
DISCRETION OVER
VALOR AND JUST
THIS ONCE...



...RUN
FOR OUR
LIVES!



ALL OF YOU, GET **INSIDE!**

I'M ACTIVATING THE PERIMETER DEFENSES!



IT'S A MULTI-STAGE SYSTEM, MIXING FORCE FIELDS WITH A FEARFUL ARRAY OF WEAPONRY.

WITHIN SECONDS, IT PROVES ITS WORTH, TAKING A DEADLY TOLL OF THE ASSAULT FORCE.

THAT'S THE GOOD NEWS.

THE BAD IS THAT THE DEMONS DON'T SEEM TO CARE.



WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME! UNDER THIS KIND OF PRESSURE, IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THE GUNS RUN OUT OF AMMO!

WHEN THEY DO, WE'LL HAVE TO BE **READY.**

KURT, WHAT HAPPENED?!

WHEN I WENT IN FOR MY NAP, THE WORLD WAS **FINE!**

IT ALL HAPPENED SO **FAST**, KITTY -- NONE OF US ARE QUITE SURE.



WITHOUT WARNING, ON EVERY CONTINENT, **N'GARAI CAIRNS** SUDDENLY APPEARED -- AND **OPENED.**

FROM THEM EMERGED **DEMONS** WITHOUT NUMBER.

AND THE **SLAUGHTER** BEGAN.

THE **MILITARY** COULDN'T STOP THEM.

SUPER-BEINGS COULDN'T STOP THEM.

THEY AREN'T INTERESTED IN **SURRENDER.** THEY WANT THE HUMAN RACE **DEAD.**

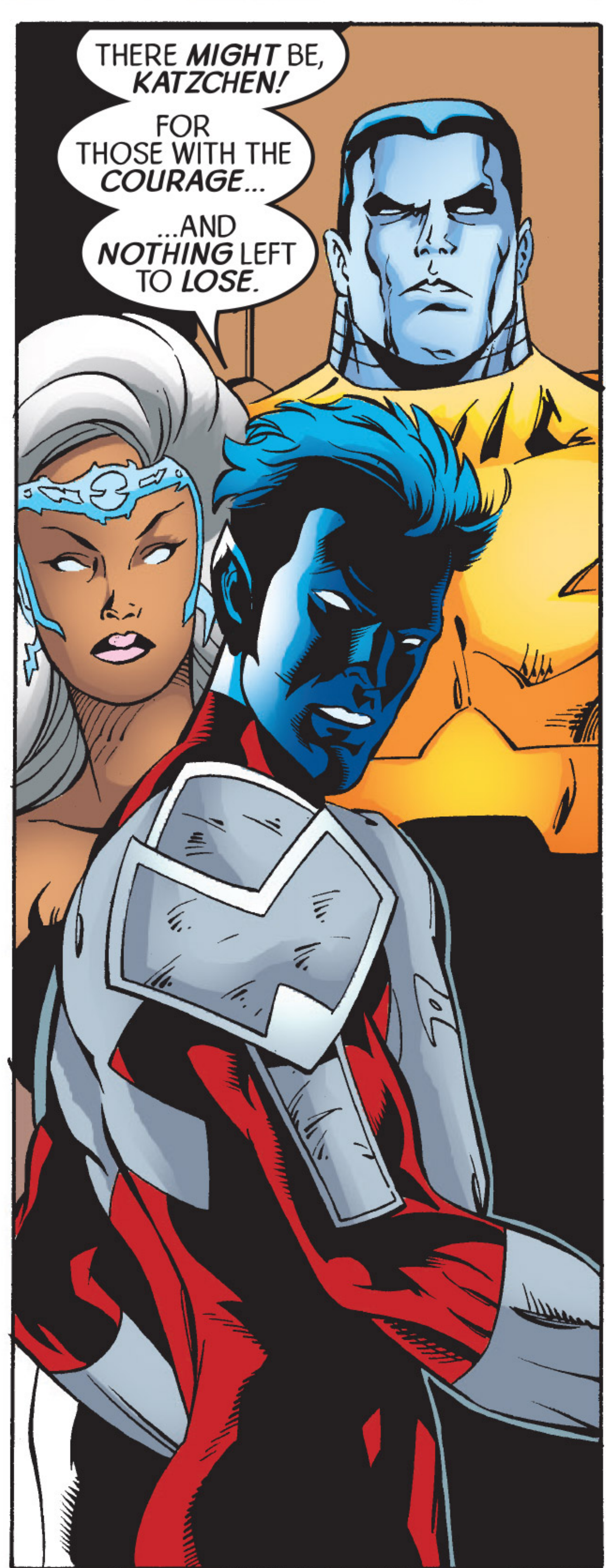


? YOU SOUND LIKE YOU'VE GIVEN UP!

KITTY, THERE'S A MOUNTAIN OF SKULLS LIKE THE ONE OUTSIDE ON **EVERY** CONTINENT!

WE'RE THE **X-MEN**, KURT!

WE'VE FOUGHT THE **N'GARAI** BEFORE, AND **BEATEN** THEM! THERE **HAS** TO BE A **WAY!**



THERE **MIGHT** BE, **KATZCHEN!**

FOR THOSE WITH THE **COURAGE...**

...AND **NOTHING** LEFT TO **LOSE.**



SOON, IN
THE DANGER
ROOM...

FUNNY TO
THINK THAT TODAY
STARTED IN HERE... WITH
ME FIGHTING DEMONS IN
A *SIMULATION*. NOW
IT'S FOR *REAL*.

I WONDER
IF THE TWO
EVENTS COULD
BE *RELATED*.

OKAY,
I'VE *SEALED*
EVERY CORRIDOR
AND ACCESS
POINT.

WHOEVER
WANTS *IN* WITHOUT
PERMISSION IS GONNA
HAVE TO *WORK* AT IT.
THIS BUYS US A LITTLE
MORE *GRACE*.

NOW
WHAT?

SIMPLE,
REALLY. ONE
SPELL OPENED
THE CAIRNS.
A COUNTER-
SPELL WILL *CLOSE*
THEM.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT
BLOOD SPELLS,
RIGHT?

KINDA WEIRD,
ISN'T IT, KURT, FOR A
POSTULANT *PRIEST* TO BE
PROPOSING *BLACK* MAGIC?

MY FOSTER MOTHER WAS
A *SORCERESS*, KATHERINE,
AS WAS MY CHILDHOOD
SWEETHEART!

SO IN THIS, I
KNOW WHEREOF
I SPEAK.

AS FOR
HOLY MOTHER
CHURCH, IT NO
LONGER *EXISTS*. THE
N'GARAI HAVE SEEN
TO THAT.

IF WE
DO NOT ACT,
THE REMNANTS
OF HUMANITY WILL
QUICKLY FOLLOW
IT INTO THAT
ABYSS.

I THOUGHT
THE *N'GARAI* HAD
BEEN *DEPOSED*.

BY SOME OUTFIT
CALLED THE
RUTAI?

THE
RUTAI ARE
NOTHING.

THE
N'GARAI ARE
ALL!

I STAND
CORRECTED.

WHERE DO
WE GO FROM
HERE, KURT?

FIRST,
WE COMPOSE A
PENTAGRAM.

WE COULD
NOT DO THIS
WITHOUT YOU,
KATZCHEN.

FOR THE
SPELL TO HAVE TRUE
POWER, IT REQUIRES
THE BLOOD OF AN
INNOCENT.

LUCKY
ME.

LUCKY
WORLD,
LASS.



YEAH, BANSHEE... THAT TOO.

GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE SPELL, KITTY, IT IS NATURAL TO FEEL... **UNEASY.**

THINK OF IT AS FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE.

JUST SO WE ALL KNOW WHAT WE'RE DOING, RIGHT?

OF THAT, KATYA, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO DOUBT.

ONE DROP OF **BLOOD.**

NO BIG DEAL. NO BIG **SACRIFICE.**

I HOPE.



THE OTHERS HAVE DONE THE SAME AND NOW THE CUP COMES BACK TO ME.

WHOA!

THE CUP'S FULL TO THE **BRIM!**

BUT THERE'S NO HINT OF BLOOD. THE CONTENTS ARE CLEAR AS SPRING WATER!

THAT SHOULD BE A **GOOD** THING, RIGHT? WE'RE CREATING SOMETHING **PURE** TO BANISH SOMETHING **FOUL.** MAKES PERFECT SENSE.

SO HOW COME I'M **TREMBLING?**

WHY DO I FEEL SO -- **WRONG?!**



MY HEAD DOESN'T FEEL PROPERLY ATTACHED.

LIKE, WHEN I WAS PHASING, I SOMEHOW LEFT MY **BRAINS** BEHIND.

GOOD THING THERE *ISN'T* BLOOD IN THIS CHALICE.

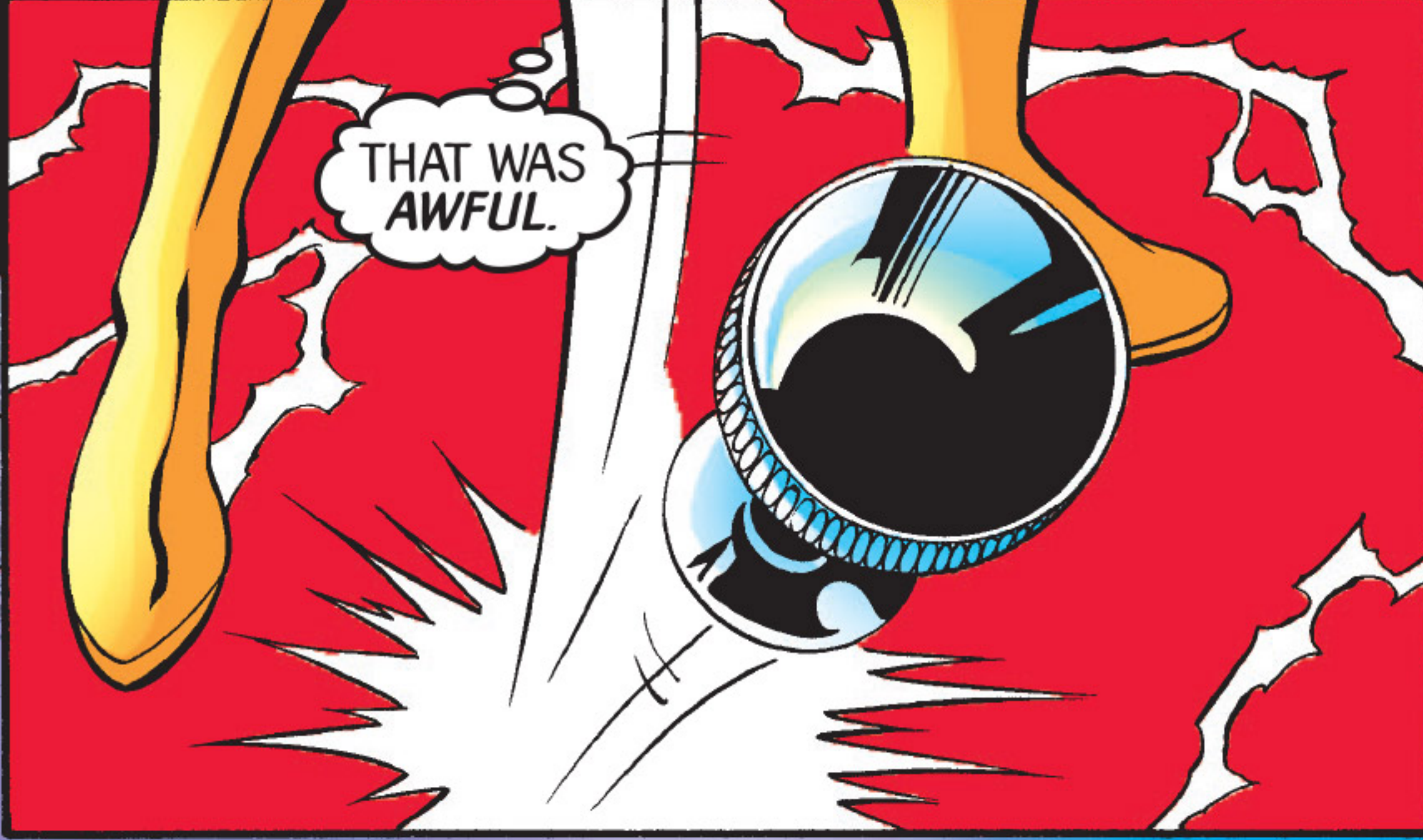
I'M SO SPAZZED, I'D HAVE TO FIGURE THAT **ALL** OF IT CAME FROM ME.

INSTINCTS ARE **SCREAMING**, BUT THESE ARE MY TEAMMATES, MY **FRIENDS**. I HAVE TO **TRUST** THEM.

ESPECIALLY WITH SO MUCH AT STAKE. THE **WHOLE WORLD!**



I CAN'T AFFORD TO **FAIL**.



THAT WAS **AWFUL**.



X WHAT COMES NEXT IS **WORSE**.
BEYOND DESCRIPTION.
BEYOND ENDURANCE.

RAW FIRE EXPLODES OUTWARD FROM THE CORE OF HER BEING, THROUGH THE PORES OF HER VERY SKIN...

...TO ENGULF HER COMPANIONS.

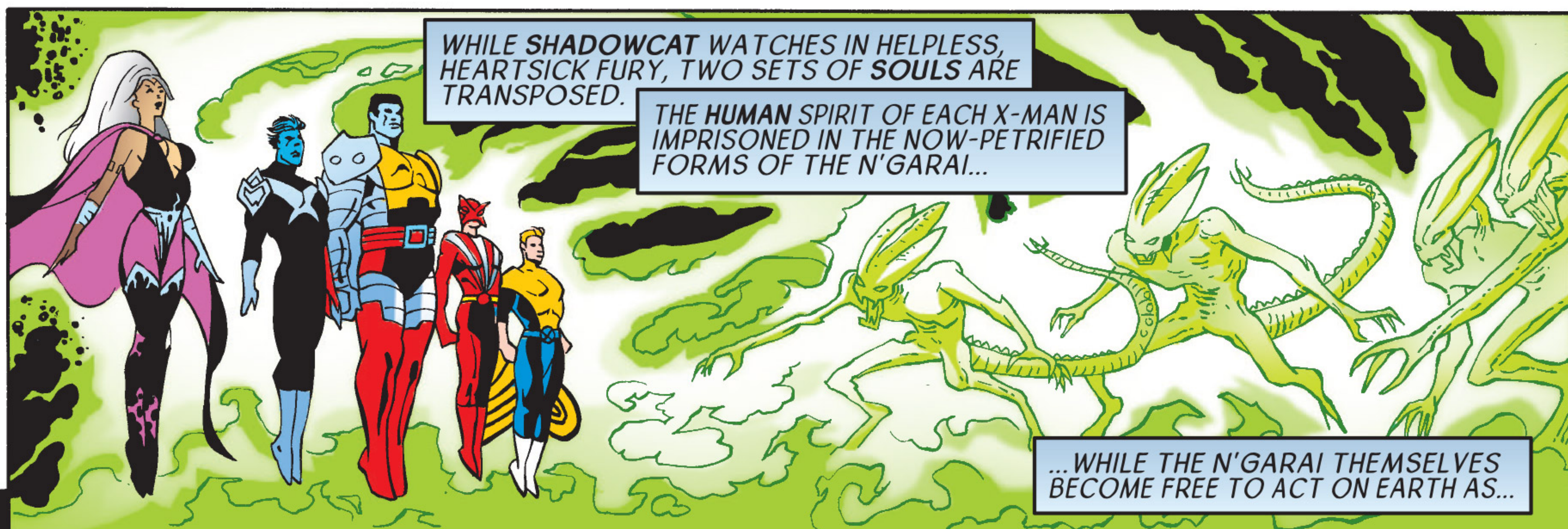
NIGHTCRAWLER TOLD HER THIS WOULD BE A **CLEANSING FLAME**. IN THAT, HE DID NOT LIE.



X BEFORE HER EYES,
IT STRIPS AWAY ALL
FALSEHOODS...

...TO REVEAL FIVE N'GARAI
STANDING IN PLACE OF HER
FRIENDS.
BUT THAT IS ONLY
THE BEGINNING.

BESIDE EACH DEMON
APPEARS THE VISAGE OF
THE X-MAN IT
IMPERSONATED.



WHILE SHADOWCAT WATCHES IN HELPLESS,
HEARTSICK FURY, TWO SETS OF SOULS ARE
TRANPOSED.

THE HUMAN SPIRIT OF EACH X-MAN IS
IMPRISONED IN THE NOW-PETRIFIED
FORMS OF THE N'GARAI...

... WHILE THE N'GARAI THEMSELVES
BECOME FREE TO ACT ON EARTH AS...



SUNFIRE!

COLOSSUS!

STORM!

BANSHEE!

NIGHTCRAWLER!



WHAT HAVE I *DONE*??!

PLAYED YOUR PART TO PERFECTION, MY BELOVED LITTLE CATSPA-W!

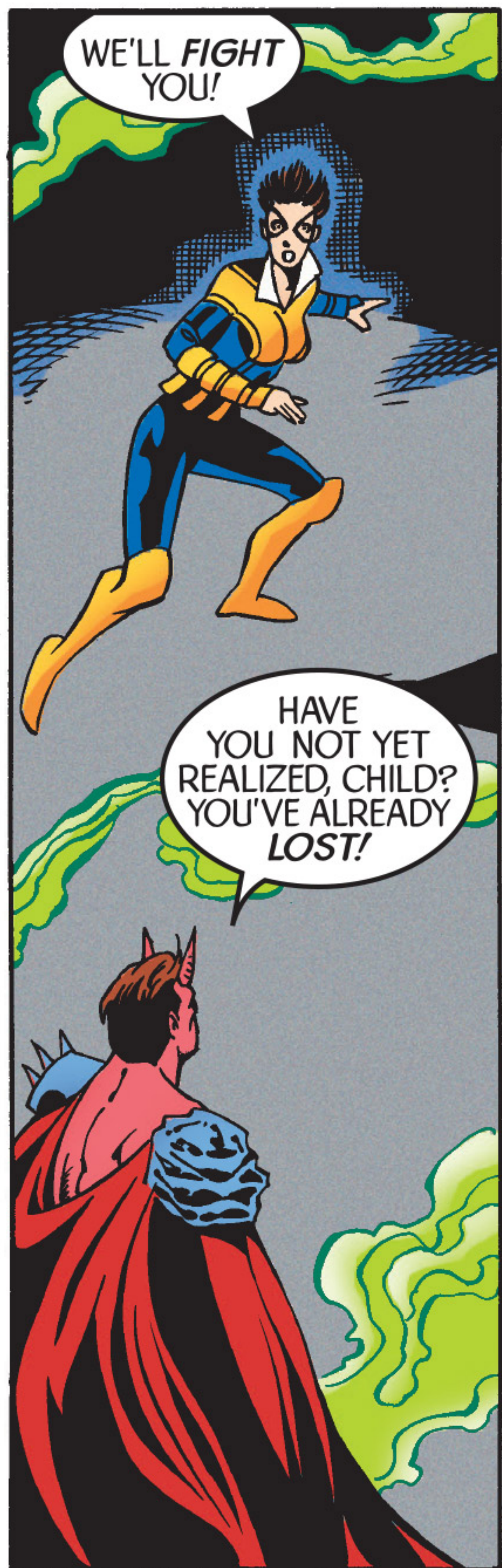


I KNOW THAT *VOICE*!

AND I'LL WAGER, THE *FACE* AS WELL!



BELASCO!



WE'LL *FIGHT* YOU!

HAVE YOU NOT YET REALIZED, CHILD? YOU'VE ALREADY *LOST*!



THE BATTLE IS *OVER*.
THE FATE OF YOUR WORLD IS *SEALED* --

-- AS WAS *YOUR OWN* FROM THE MOMENT WE FIRST *MET*!

Waayyy back in Uncanny X-Men #160. -- Mike



FROM THAT FATEFUL MOMENT, WHEN YOU THOUGHT YOU'D *ESCAPED* MY REALM...

...YOU'VE BEEN MY UNWITTING *PAWN*.

THANKS TO YOU, FIVE *BLOODSTONES* WILL BE FORMED FROM THE SOULS OF FIVE *FOUNDING* MEMBERS OF YOUR ACCURSED "NEW X-MEN" TEAM!

THOSE *BLOODSTONES* WILL OPEN THE MYSTIC GATEWAY TO THE WORLD OF MY *MASTERS*, THE *ELDER GODS*, AND YOUR OWN WILL PERISH IN *FIRE*!

THE LANDSCAPE AROUND ME IS *TRANSFORMING*! I WASN'T IN THE MANSION OR THE DANGER ROOM ALL ALL!

THIS IS *LIMBO*!



TO COMPLETE THE SPELL, A CATALYST STONE IS REQUIRED.

ONCE UPON A TIME, THAT HONOR WAS INTENDED FOR YOUR BEST FRIEND...

...THE SISTER OF COLOSSUS, ILLYANA RASPUTIN.

BUT SINCE SHE IS DEAD...

...IT SEEMS ONLY FITTING THAT ROLE NOW GO TO YOU!

YAAAGH!!



IT IS DONE.



DO YOU LIKE MY NEW ARM, CHILD?

A GIFT FROM MY MASTERS, A TOKEN OF THEIR FAITH.

I HAVE SERVED THEM WELL.

BY THIS ONE ACT, I PROVIDE THEM A REALM RIPE FOR CONQUEST, AND REVENGE MYSELF ON MY MOST HATED ADVERSARIES.

YOUR COMPANIONS WILL KNOW HORROR BEYOND COMPREHENSION...

...AS I EMBRACE GLORY.



WHAT PRICE BRAVADO NOW, SHADOWCAT?

BEFORE TOO LONG, YOU WILL **BEG** FOR DEATH, AND IT SHALL EVER BE **DENIED**.

YOU MADE ALL THIS POSSIBLE. HOW FITTING THEN, THAT YOU BEAR WITNESS TO EVERY ACT TO COME.

AFTER THAT, FELL DAMNATION WILL SEEM LIKE -- HEAVEN.

IN
YOUR DREAMS,
SORCERER!

YOU?!
IMPOSSIBLE!

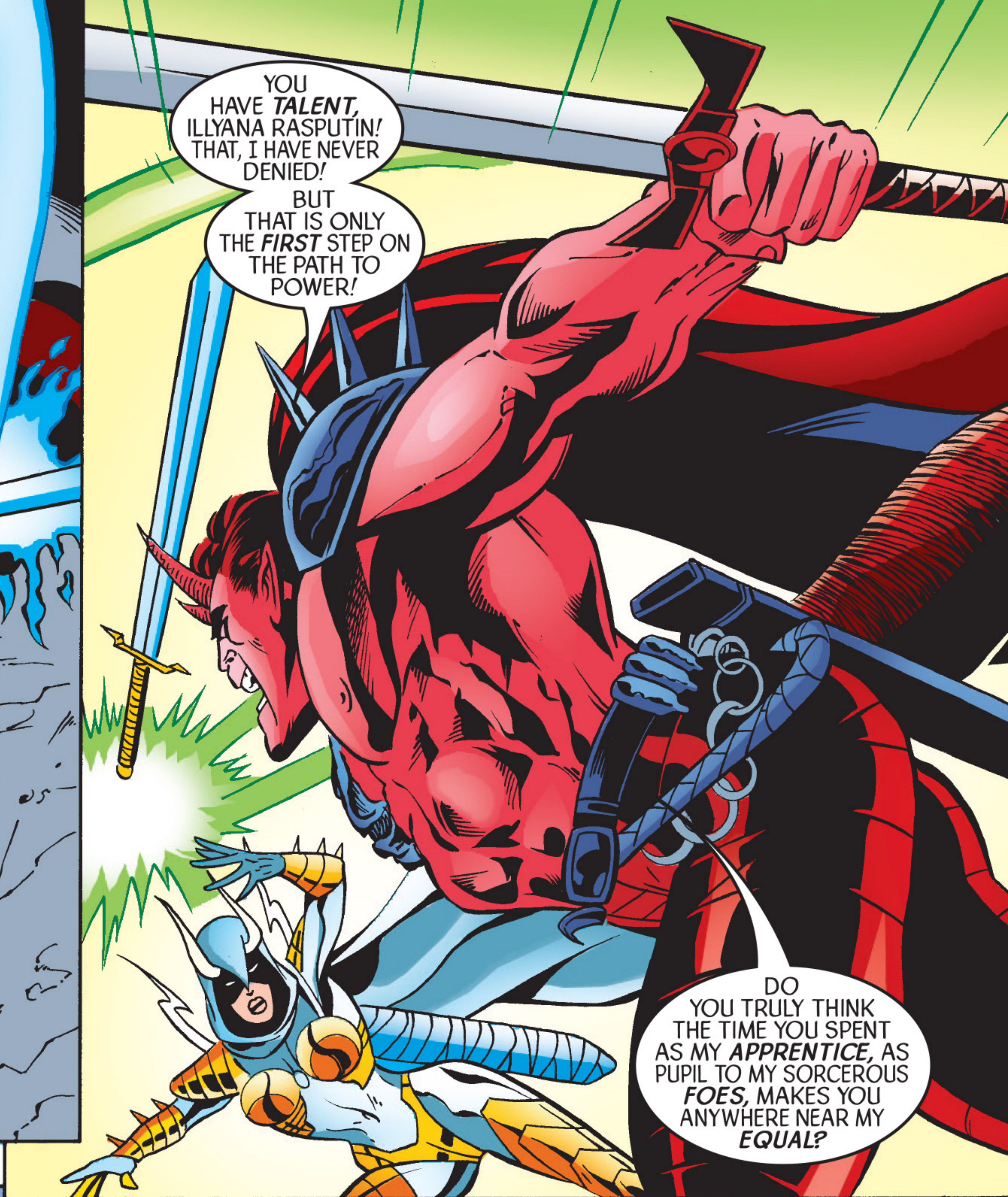
THAT'S
WHERE YOU'RE
WRONG,
BELASCO.

magik
NEVER
DIES!





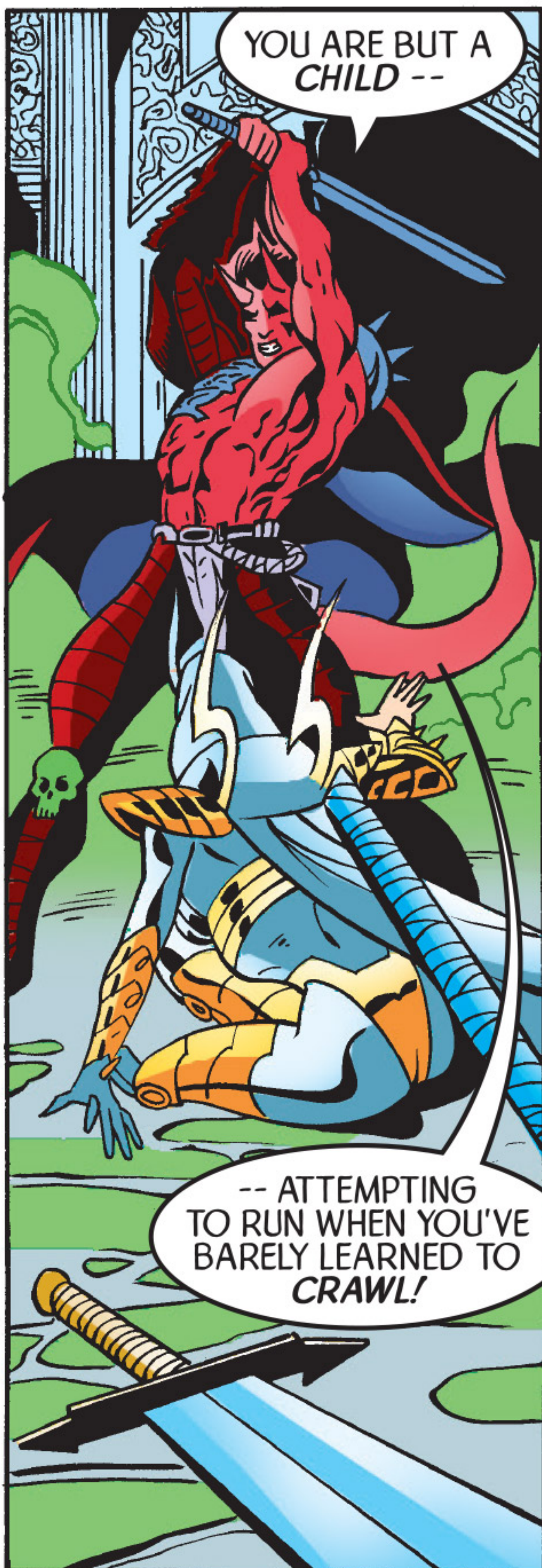
NO
MATTER



YOU
HAVE **TALENT**,
ILLYANA RASPUTIN!
THAT, I HAVE NEVER
DENIED!

BUT
THAT IS ONLY
THE **FIRST** STEP ON
THE PATH TO
POWER!

DO
YOU TRULY THINK
THE TIME YOU SPENT
AS MY **APPRENTICE**, AS
PUPIL TO MY SORCEROUS
FOES, MAKES YOU
ANYWHERE NEAR MY
EQUAL?



YOU ARE BUT A
CHILD --

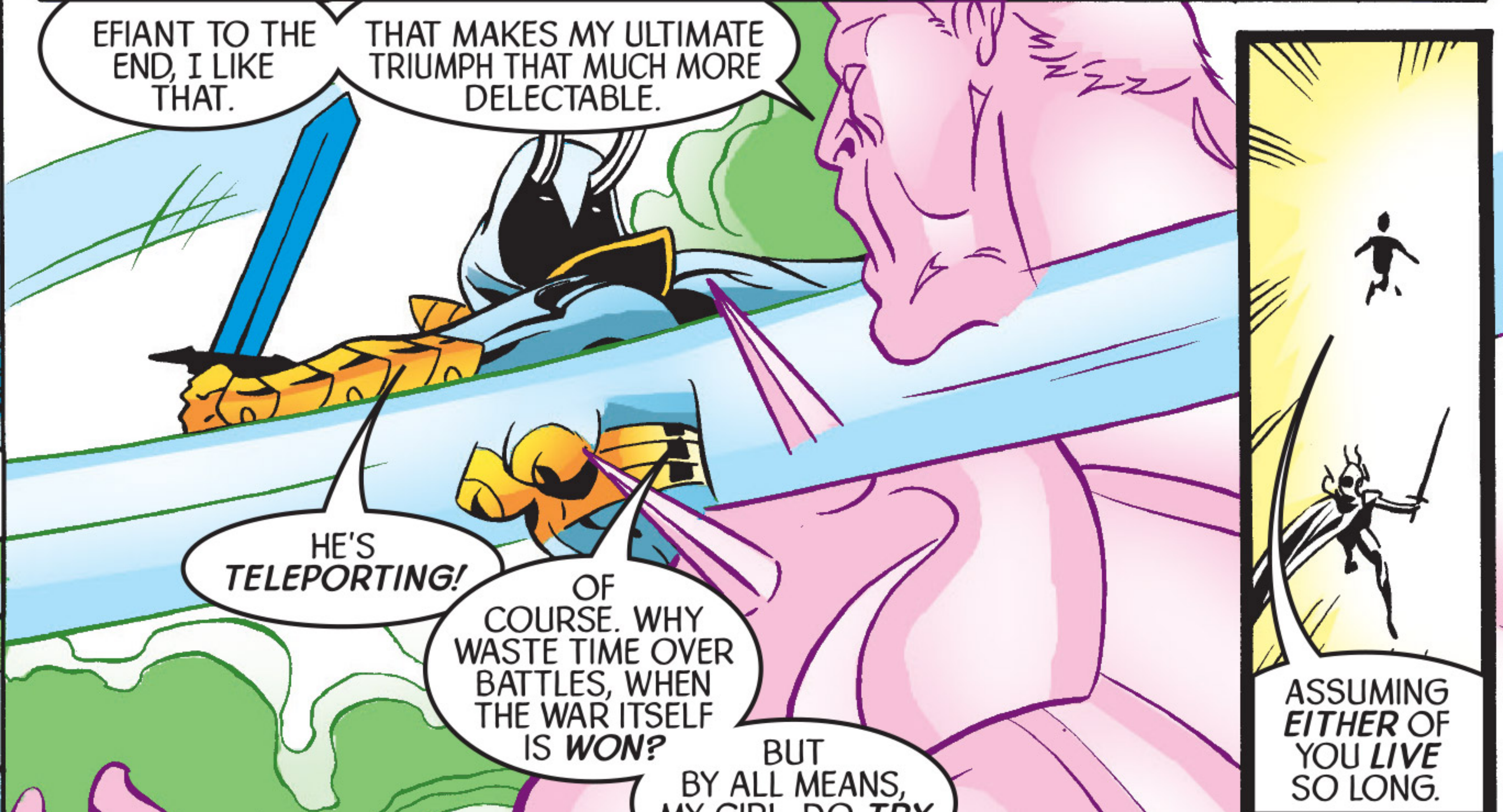
-- ATTEMPTING
TO RUN WHEN YOU'VE
BARELY LEARNED TO
CRAWL!



LAST TIME ...THESE TWO CHILDREN
I LOOKED, BUB...
PRETTY MUCH
BEAT YOU!

MY
SWORD!

TAKE HIM,
ILLYANA!



EFFIANT TO THE
END, I LIKE
THAT.

THAT MAKES MY ULTIMATE
TRIUMPH THAT MUCH MORE
DELECTABLE.

HE'S
TELEPORTING!

OF
COURSE. WHY
WASTE TIME OVER
BATTLES, WHEN
THE WAR ITSELF
IS **WON?**

BUT
BY ALL MEANS,
MY GIRL, DO **TRY**
AGAIN.



ASSUMING
EITHER OF
YOU LIVE
SO LONG.



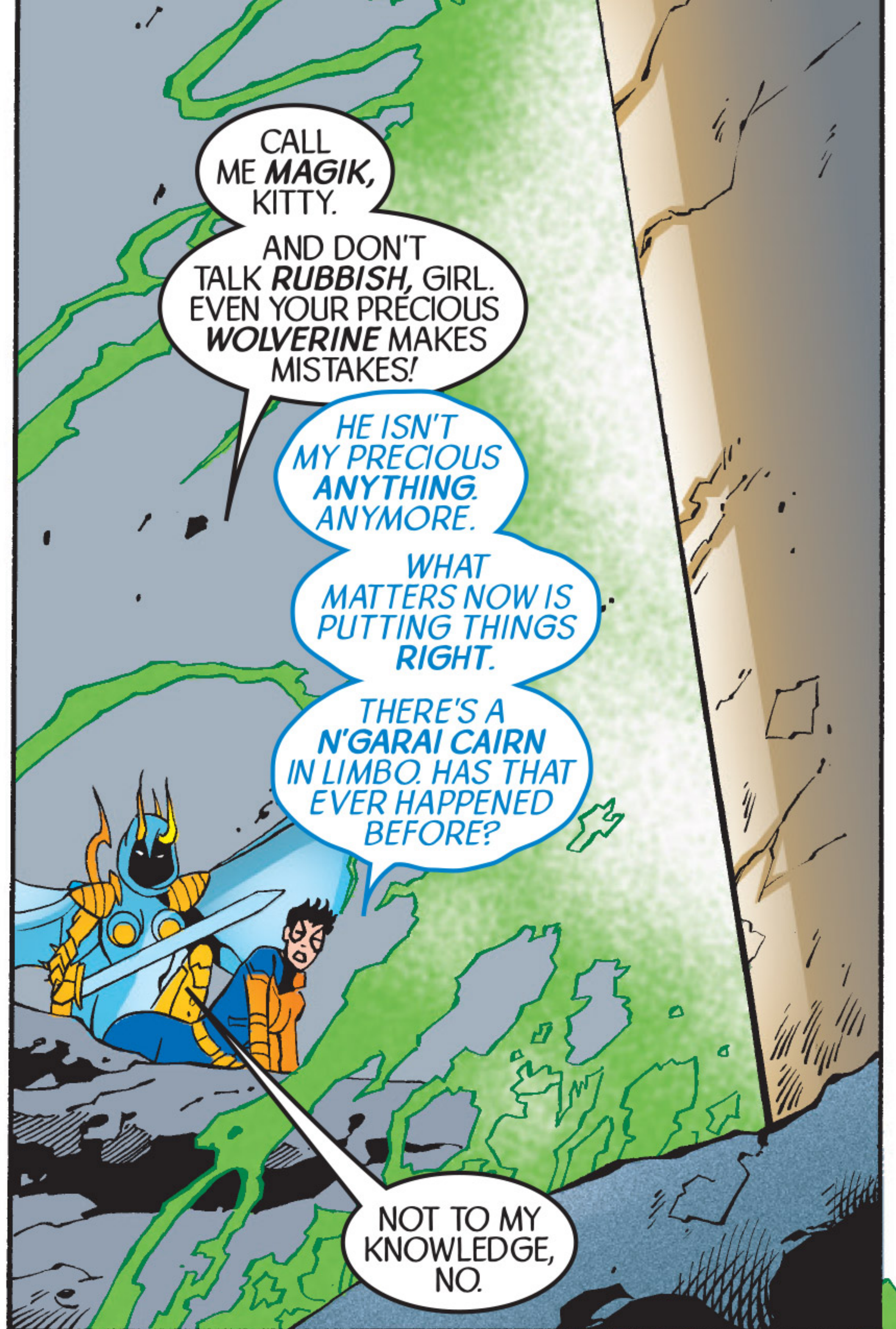
HOW ARE YOU
ABLE TO MOVE?
WITHOUT YOUR
SOUL --?!

TOO DARN
STUBBORN TO
KNOW WHEN
TO QUIT, I
GUESS.

TOO DARN
ANGRY, THAT'S
FOR SURE. BELASCO
PLAYED ME LIKE A CHEAP
VIOLIN, AND HE'S
BEEN DOING IT
FOR YEARS!

HOW
WERE YOU TO
KNOW?

I'M A
HERO, ILLYANA!
I'M AN X-MAN. I'M
SUPPOSED TO KNOW
BETTER!



CALL
ME **MAGIK**,
KITTY.

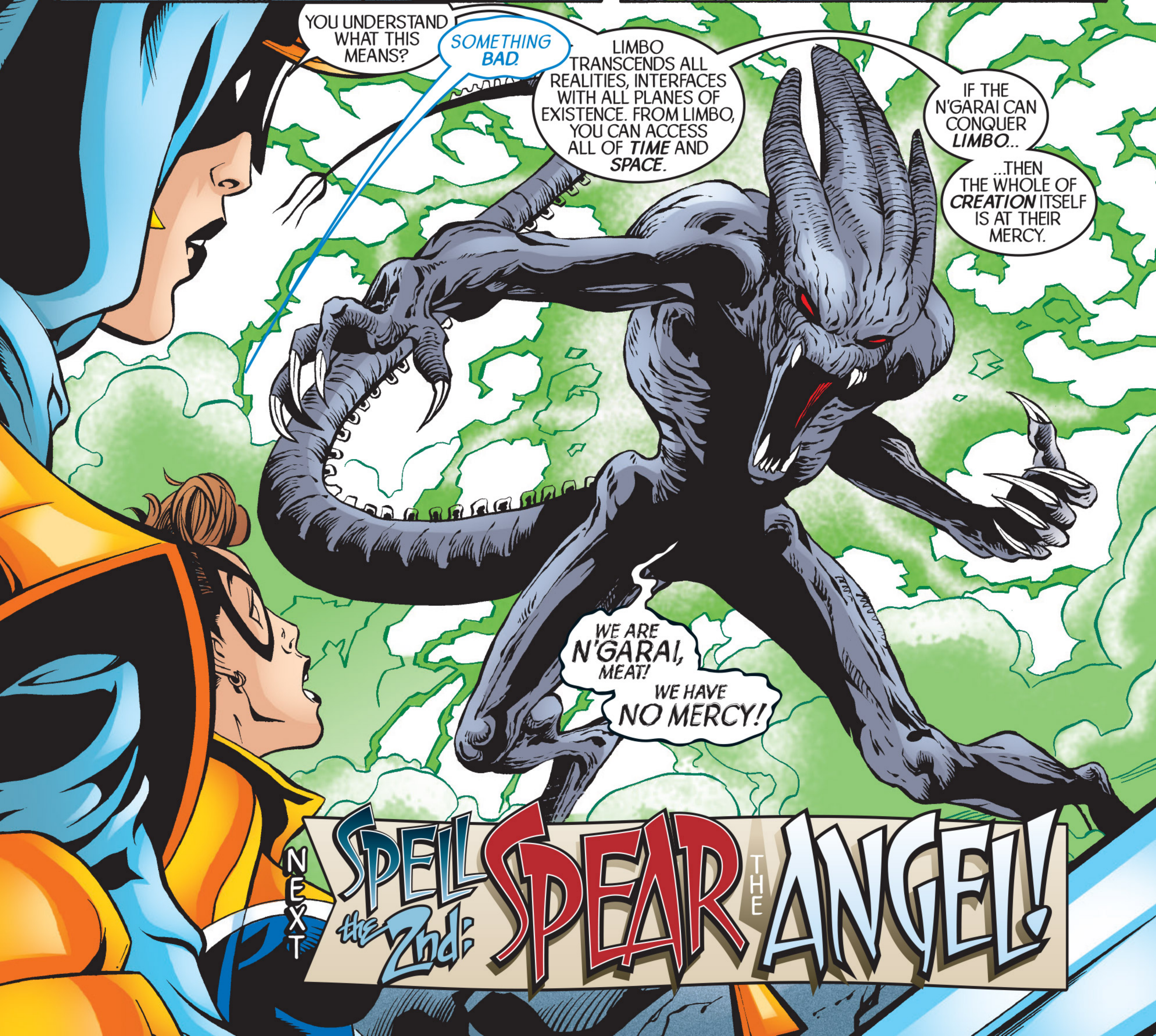
AND DON'T
TALK **RUBBISH**, GIRL.
EVEN YOUR PRECIOUS
WOLVERINE MAKES
MISTAKES!

HE ISN'T
MY PRECIOUS
ANYTHING
ANYMORE.

WHAT
MATTERS NOW IS
PUTTING THINGS
RIGHT.

THERE'S A
N'GARAI CAIRN
IN LIMBO. HAS THAT
EVER HAPPENED
BEFORE?

NOT TO MY
KNOWLEDGE,
NO.



YOU UNDERSTAND
WHAT THIS
MEANS?

**SOMETHING
BAD.**

LIMBO
TRANSCENDS ALL
REALITIES, INTERFACES
WITH ALL PLANES OF
EXISTENCE. FROM LIMBO,
YOU CAN ACCESS
ALL OF **TIME** AND
SPACE.

IF THE
N'GARAI CAN
CONQUER
LIMBO...

...THEN
THE WHOLE OF
CREATION ITSELF
IS AT THEIR
MERCY.

WE ARE
N'GARAI,
MEAT!
WE HAVE
NO MERCY!

NEXT **SPELL the 2nd: SPEAR THE ANGEL!**